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A Minimalist Translation

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Dao De Jing by Lao Zi

A Minimalist Translation

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Welcome to yet another translation of the Dao De Jing (DDJ), or Tao Te Ching in the old-fashioned spelling. Why should you want to read this translation? This version attempts to include an exact translation of every Chinese symbol in the original text, with as few added words and paraphrasing as possible. This results in sentences which hopefully provide a more literal translation, but are bare and minimalist, sometimes awkward, and often doesn't make sense. You, the reader, will have to wrestle with some sentences, trying to wring out of them whatever meaning their author was trying to express 2300 years ago, instead of my simply telling you what I think they mean. I also show you what words were translated exactly, what was interpreted, and what was added or left out, so you can see exactly how much the English translation has in common with the original Chinese. I even point out alternative translations, so you can choose for yourself in some cases.

Another difference is that while this translation is primarily based on the "Wang Bi" ancient manuscript (used by most translators), it presents some of the ideas from the earliest versions of the DDJ we have available, if those ideas are present in the majority of all the sources.

Finally, scholars have long speculated that different parts of the DDJ were written by different authors at different times. By analyzing the symbols, phrases, and themes in each chapter, the chapters can be separated into at least three groups. The appendix presents the chapters in these groups, so that the reader may better see the common themes each group focused on.

Who Wrote the DDJ and When?

There is a great deal of debate over these questions, enough to fill a book in their own right! What follows is just a very brief introduction for the first-time reader who has no idea who "Lao Zi" was (please note that all dates are very approximate).

Although the author of the DDJ is always given as "Lao Zi" or "Lao Tsu" (old spelling), we have no historical proof of his existence. A Chinese court historian named Sima Qian, who lived around 115 BCE, wrote a biography of Lao Zi (literally "old master", unless Lao is a family name – in which case "master Lao") that presents three different possible traditions, although the accuracy of any of them is doubtful. The first says that Lao Zi was a contemporary of Confucius (500 BCE). His family name was Li ("plum"), his given name was Er ("ear"), and he was posthumously called Dan ("long ear"). He was an official in the imperial archives, but when the Zhou dynasty began to decline, he decided to leave China. When he reached the northwest border of China, the border guard asked him to write down his teachings, which resulted in a document of about 5000 characters in two sections. Later in the same document, Sima Qian also speculates that Lao Zi may or may not have been Lao Dan ("old long ear"), an advisor to Duke Xian (370 BCE). Finally, Sima Qian says that a man named Lao Laizi ("old returning master") authored a Daoist book that had 15 parts, was born in the same province as Lao Zi, and also was a contemporary of Confucius. These three accounts are further complicated by reported meetings between Confucius and someone called Lao Dan in various Confucian texts.

References to the DDJ by other ancient Chinese writers indicate that at least some parts of the DDJ were in existence by 300 BCE, and it was being referred to extensively by 250 BCE. One linguistic analysis of the rhyme schemes indicates that it may have originated as early as 450 BCE, and if the DDJ contains the written version of earlier oral traditions, these rhymes may reflect its oldest origins (because rhymes are easier to memorize). Other references and linguistic analyses place its beginnings around perhaps 375-325 BCE, and the earliest known written portions of it (described in the next section) date to about 300 BCE.

So, some parts of the DDJ seem to have first appeared in written form between roughly 350-300 BCE, although its roots could be much older. It certainly existed in some version of its finished form (roughly 5000 characters in 81 chapters) by 200 BCE.

There is also debate on whether the text represents the work of mostly one author, or was added to by different authors over the course of about a century, or was later compiled from different traditions by one person.

The most recent versions of the DDJ are separated into 81 chapters, and two major parts. The first part, consisting of chapters 1-37, primarily discusses Dao, while chapters 38-81 primarily discuss De. Ancient authors referring to the DDJ also speak of versions that are divided into 64, 68, or 72 chapters.

Different Versions of the DDJ

There are at least six different ancient sources of the text (all dates are approximate) :

"Guodian" (GUO) – discovered in 1993 and written around 300 BCE or slightly earlier, this version matches only about 31 chapters of the later versions of the DDJ, and its chapters are ordered completely differently than the later versions. The Chinese symbols are so ancient that scholars disagree on what modern symbols they should correspond to, and there are occasional spots on the originals where the characters can no longer be read.

"Mawangdui" (MWD) – discovered in 1973, there are two slightly different versions ("A" and "B"), obviously written by two different people, dating to about 200 BCE and 175 BCE respectively. While all 81 chapters are present, both versions reverse the two major parts ("Dao" and "De") compared to later versions. In addition, the order of a few of the chapters within the parts is different, as is the order of some sections within the chapters! The Chinese symbols are also so ancient that scholars disagree on what modern symbols they should correspond to, and there are many spots where the characters cannot be read.

"Fu Yi" (FY) – Fu Yi was a scholar who lived around 600 CE and claimed that the version he presents and discusses was found in a grave that from his description could possibly be dated to around 200 BCE.

"Wang Bi" (WB) – written around 240 CE, this is the "standard" version that most translators use, although there are several slightly different variations of it.

"He Shang Gong" (HSG) – a legendary and possibly mythical person who may have lived around 170 BCE, but the work which presents and discusses the version of the DDJ associated with him is not mentioned by others until 300 CE. Many scholars think this version was probably written closer to 300 CE and attributed to He Shang Gong to give it authority. There are also many slightly different variations of this text available.

In comparing the six sources, it is easy to see the changes in philosophy of the early Daoists over the centuries. In general, the three earliest versions (GUO, MWD/A, MWD/B) more-or-less agree with each other, the three later versions (FY, WB, HSG) more-or-less agree with each other (despite the tentative dating of FY to 200 BCE), the two groups are often slightly different from each other, and occasionally very different. However, FY does sometimes agree with the three earlier versions. Only the later versions contain the vast majority of criticisms of Confucianism, although even GUO has a few.

WB, HSG, and FY were chosen as sources for this translation mainly because their earliest manuscripts are complete, and the Chinese characters are "modern" enough that there is less doubt as to their meaning. But there are occasional differences between them, so a 2/3 majority vote was used to determine which symbol to use. This would result in a document which is essentially the same as WB, since WB and HSG are almost always the same. However, in comparing all <u>six</u> sources (or fewer if the chapter is not in GUO, or the earlier symbols cannot be read), it becomes obvious that sometimes significant changes were made only in the most recent sources. Thus a symbol was changed to the one used by the older sources if the majority of <u>all</u> available sources use the different symbol, and it adds to the understanding of the sentence. In the case of a tie, the more recent symbol was used. These rules were used for adding or deleting symbols as well.

The Translation Process

There are many reasons why translations differ, besides the problems inherent in translating from a language where : each symbol represents a word that has multiple (sometimes very different) meanings; tenses, articles, and plurals are not indicated; and one symbol can represent either a noun or adjective, another a verb or adverb, another all four!

1. What source is used : for WB and HSG, which version of what source; in the oldest sources, what modern symbols to use
2. Accurately knowing all the possible English meanings for each symbol (and sometimes pairs of symbols), including changes in meaning over the millennia, and understanding ancient idioms
3. Having to pick just one meaning for each symbol
4. Organizing each sentence into something that makes sense, which is helped by understanding something of ancient Chinese grammar

The cultural background, knowledge, biases, beliefs, and agenda of the translator affect every step but the first. “Agenda” refers to how the translator approaches the content of the DDJ : as a work of mysticism vs. philosophy vs. military strategy vs. advice to emperors, etc.

The goals for this translation were :

- Include an English word or phrase for every Chinese symbol in the sentence
- Use exact translations of the Chinese symbols wherever possible
- Minimal interpretation of individual symbols, only where needed for clarity
- Use the same English word(s) for the same symbol(s) when appropriate
- As few added English words as possible to make it a correct English sentence
- No interpretation of the final translated sentence

Individual symbols are interpreted only when they either don’t make as much sense literally, or the resulting sentence would be awkward in English. In some cases, if a symbol means two English words that both seem to fit equally well, they are combined into one phrase, such as “heart/mind” for 心 (see the next section), or 玄 which can mean “mystery”, “profound”, “deep”, or “dark”, and is consistently translated as “deep and mysterious” or “deep mystery”, depending on the context.

The above goals hopefully help minimize, but cannot eliminate, translator bias. The problem is that each Chinese symbol still has several meanings, and the translator must pick just one for each symbol (step 3) to create an English sentence that makes sense (step 4). It is impossible to avoid translator bias here because the translator must choose what makes sense or feels right to them, in both word meanings and overall grammar.

For example, there is a line in chapter 58 : 禍 兮 福 之 所 倚 where 兮 can mean “good fortune” or “happiness” and 禍 can mean “misfortune” or “disaster”, but by reflection with 兮 could also be interpreted as “unhappiness”. 倚 can mean “lean on”, “rely on”, or “depend on”, so all of these are valid translations :

Misfortune is that which good fortune leans on.
Misfortune is that which good fortune relies on.
Misfortune is that which good fortune depends on.
Unhappiness is that which happiness leans on.
Unhappiness is that which happiness relies on.
Unhappiness is that which happiness depends on.

Beyond the differences between using “fortune” (less personal : what happens to you) versus “happiness” (more personal : how you feel), there are also subtle differences : saying that one “relies” on the other is different than saying that they mutually support each other (as possibly indicated by the sentence following this one, not shown here).

Unlike the previous example, where the different translations for each symbol are more-or-less related, sometimes the choice the translator makes can affect the overall meaning or even the emotional impact of the sentence. In chapter 20, there is a line : 我 獨 若 遺 in which the last symbol can be variously translated into :

I alone seem lost.
I alone seem to have lost everything.
I alone seem to have been left behind.
I alone seem to be forgotten.

Each of which says a completely different thing.

And in chapter 46, there is a line : 罪 莫 大 於 可 欲 where the first symbol can mean any of : "sin", "crime", "vice", or "fault", so (ignoring options for the other symbols), all of these are valid :

There is no sin greater than the capacity for desire.
There is no crime greater than the capacity for desire.
There is no vice greater than the capacity for desire.
There is no fault greater than the capacity for desire.

"Sin" of course has very negative religious connotations in the West, while "crime" and "vice" also have stronger negative associations than "fault".

But there are other, even more significant ways in which the translator's choices affect the result. Because of the many (sometimes unrelated) possible meanings of each Chinese symbol, it is possible to come up with multiple translations of the exact same sentence that are completely different in meaning! For example, in chapter 41, there is a line : 大 方 無 隅 where 方 can mean both "region" and "square", while 隅 can be "border" or "corner", so both of these are valid translations :

The greatest region is without borders.
The greatest square is without corners.

And in chapter 45 : 大 巧 若 拙 where 巧 can be "skillful" or "clever", and 拙 can mean "stupid" or "clumsy", both of these are equally likely :

Great skillfulness seems clumsy.
Great cleverness seems stupid.

Finally, even when there is no ambiguity about the meaning of the individual symbols, it sometimes hard to determine what overall meaning was intended. From chapter 35, there is a line : 道 之 出 言 淡 兮 in which the first four symbols literally mean "words of Dao", but does this mean "talking about Dao" or "the words that come out of Dao"? It can be argued both ways due to subtleties in the meanings of the symbols, but there is a tremendous difference in meaning between the two translations.

In addition, there are a few symbols whose modern English meanings just don't make sense within the context of the sentence, probably due either to transcription errors or changes in meaning over the millennia. The English words used for these symbols are usually selected according to context.

Common Terms

Because the translation itself is meant to involve minimal interpretation and explanation, some of the words and phrases that are used repeatedly need to be discussed beforehand for clarity. Keep in mind that volumes have been written about some of these concepts – these are just brief summaries for the reader new to Daoism.

道 Dao : most often translated as the "way"; according to various passages in the DDJ, Dao appears to be the way of nature (or the universe), the process of being in harmony with that way, the source that creates and nourishes all things, and absolute ultimate reality itself (and according to the opening lines of the first chapter, this description is completely inadequate); it is left untranslated so that readers may "fill in the blank" for

themselves as they read; “the Dao” is used as little as possible because in English that implies that Dao is more of a thing than a process; Dao is sometimes referred to as “it” to avoid awkward grammar (or if it was written that way in the original Chinese), but do not think of Dao as a noun (just for fun sometime, try reading “Dao” as “Daoing”…); one exception is when “Dao of” is used (for example, “the Dao of heaven”) – this seems to be literally referring to the way heaven does things, so it is translated as “the Way of heaven”, but “Way” is capitalized to remind the reader that this is also Dao; similarly, “this Dao” seems to be referring more to “this *way* (of following Dao), and is translated “this Way”

德 De : most often translated as “virtue”, “integrity”, or “(inner) power”, De is described in chapter 49 as “goodness” or “virtue” and “honesty” or “trust”; De might be infused into things when they are created by/from Dao, or something that develops when Dao is fully expressed through a person; De seems to be both the quality of being virtuous and the power that comes from being virtuous, so it might best be thought of as “the power of one’s virtue” or “the power from one’s integrity”, but it is also left untranslated so that readers may “fill in the blank” for themselves as they read

天 “heaven” : a complex concept, this symbol seems to have connotations of the sky, nature (including people and societies), that which controls our destinies, as well as possibly that of a celestial god-like spirit (and/or perhaps ancestral spirits)

天 地 “heaven and earth” : everything, the universe, all that is

天 下 “the world” : literally “heaven under”, it is perhaps better thought of as “all things under heaven”; it is left as “the world” because the English grammar sometimes gets awkward using the more accurate phrase; some translate it as “the empire”, which gives the entire document a much more imperialistic and militaristic slant

萬 物 “ten thousand creatures” : “ten thousand” as used here does not refer to a specific number, but means “innumerable” or “myriad”; together the symbols are perhaps better thought of as “all creatures and things”

聖 人 “sage” : literally “holy man”; in the DDJ, a sage is anyone who fully embodies and expresses Dao and De; as the ruling class would have been one of the few literate groups in ancient Chinese culture reading the DDJ, it seems possible that references to the way the sage does things could have also been a subtle way of saying “this is what a wise ruler would do” (especially in chapters like 5, 57, and 66, where the sage seems to be the ruler)

常 “ever-constant” : while this is often translated as “eternal”, it probably had more of a sense of “constant” or “permanent” in ancient China; unfortunately “constant” doesn’t imply the enduring nature of “permanent”, nor does “permanent” imply the unchanging quality of “constant”, so “ever-constant” is used here

心 “heart/mind” : usually translated as either “heart” or “mind” (the symbol means both), “heart/mind” seems to be the best translation

自 然 “naturally so” : this has the connotation of something that happens spontaneously, without being forced (“of itself”, “of its own accord”, “on its own”); Dao is “naturally so”, and although the DDJ does not say so explicitly, presumably the sage acts “naturally so” as well

樸 “uncarved block” (of wood) : just as a block of wood can be carved into virtually anything, in the DDJ the “uncarved block” represents the limitless undefined potential of our original nature

無 為 “non-action” : not passivity or lack of action, but spontaneous action taken at the proper time according to the situation

無 事 “non-interference” : to change the natural order of things as little as possible in achieving your goals

無 知 “without-knowledge” : not an absence of knowledge, but a kind of understanding that does not resort to pre-conceived ideas or rules

無 名 “without-name” : a reminder that things, concepts, and experiences are far more than the names we give them and ultimately cannot be described with words (in contrast to the Confucians, whose goal was to find the “correct name” for everything)

無 欲 “without-desire” : not a total lack of desire, but desires that do not control us or our happiness; a sort of spontaneous, unattached desire

無 or 無 有 “non-being” : the nameless absolute that is the source of all existence (“being”)

爭 “strive” : to struggle or make vigorous effort to achieve something, perhaps competing against others to get it; the opposite of non-action

陰 “yin” : the feminine principle; receptive, yielding, dark, cool, soft

陽 “yang” : the masculine principle; aggressive, active, light, warm, hard

氣 “qi” (ch’i, chi) : vitality, life energy, life force, vital energy

善 “virtue” : the traditional sense of moral virtue and goodness

靜 “stillness” : a mental/emotional stillness of the heart/mind

谷 “valley” : the image of the valley is often used in the DDJ; a valley represents receptiveness (because it accepts all things that come into it), openness, and emptiness, and so is feminine in nature

身 “self” : often translated as “body” by others (it can mean either), it is my personal bias that this symbol seems to consistently refer to the sense-of-self, personality, or ego

復 or 歸 or 復 歸 or 反 “returning” : the DDJ uses four different symbols to refer to the concept of returning, and it is used many times; beyond the everyday meaning, in the DDJ creatures and people often return to their source, true nature, or original state of pure and unformed potential; sometimes they just “return”, and from where or to where is not specified

明 “insight” : an intuitive, without-knowledge, understanding of what is; this is another personal bias – while the literal translations include “wise”, “clear”, “understanding”, “perceptive”, and “sight”, it seems that this symbol can be consistently interpreted as “insight” (which is in agreement with the literal translations); in addition, it is variously translated by other modern translators as “enlightenment” and even “insight”

事 “duties” : one’s personal and business affairs, responsibilities, etc.

吾 “I” : on the rare occasions this is used, think of this as someone who is a sage-like Daoist rather than merely “the author”

百 姓 “100 families” : in ancient times this phrase referred to the entire ruling class

士 “scholar” : around the time of the DDJ, this referred to the elite “intellectual” class of Chinese society, the teachers and philosophers (Confucius would have been considered a scholar)

君 “ruler”, 王 “king”, etc. : there are many symbols and euphemisms for various members of the nobility (“nobles”, “superiors”, “master of the people”, “son of heaven”, “master of 10,000 chariots”, etc.)

貴 “high rank” : any position of power or admiration

While the DDJ is over 2000 years old, its wisdom is still applicable today, but don't be fooled by the ancient wording! "King" could today apply to anyone who runs things, manages others, or leads any kind of group (from the nation's leader to a corporation CEO to…your boss), and "high rank" could apply to government officials, billionaires, or even movie stars.

There are also many Confucian terms used in the DDJ :

仁 "kindness" : being benevolent, kindhearted, humane
義 "righteousness" (translated as "morality" to avoid religious associations) : having a sense of justice, doing the right thing, being morally upright
禮 "propriety" : ritual courtesy and formality; proper etiquette
智 "wise", "wisdom" : as it says
信 "truth", "trust", "honest" : as it says
忠 "loyalty" : as it says
勇 "courage", "brave" : as it says
廉 "honorable" : having a sense of honor or integrity; incorruptibility
孝 "filial piety" (translated as "devoted children") : respect your elders and parents, duty to your parents, care for the elderly
慈 "compassion" : benevolence, mercy; as specifically applied to parents' attitude towards their children, this is translated as "loving parents"
君 子 "noble man" : literally "son of the ruler", this can mean "nobleman" (one who belongs to the nobility), but is also a Confucian term that means one who is noble or moral in character and embodies the above qualities; sometimes translated by others as "gentleman" or "superior man"

Many symbols in the DDJ are used to provide emphasis (similar to an exclamation point in English), and can either come at the end of a sentence or can be used to emphasize a word or phrase in the middle of a sentence. Many translators ignore these latter symbols entirely, while others preface the emphasized word with "so…", "such…", "very…", "oh,…", etc. Here, an exclamation point is used immediately after the word, but then the sentence continues on. One symbol in particular implies that what precedes it is not only true but has always been true, which is translated as "indeed!"

References

Introduction :

Laozi, by Alan Chan; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/laozi/; 2009

Translations :

Dao De Jing : A Philosophical Translation, by Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall; Ballantine, New York; 2003 (*note that this is a translation of the MWD sources*)

Lao Zi zhi Dao De Jing : Two Literal English Translations, by Bradford Hatcher; http://www.hermetica.info/LaoziA.htm; 2005

Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, by D.C. Lau; Penguin Books, London; 1963 (*this is a reasonably literal translation, with minimal interpretation; note that his 1994 book is an MWD translation*)

The Way and Its Power, by Arthur Waley; Grove Press, New York; 1958

These were mostly used for their own explanations of the more difficult passages and ancient Chinese idioms, but were sometimes used for comparison during the translation process.

Ancient Chinese Sources :

Comparisons of Chinese Versions, by Nina Carerra; http://www.daoisopen.com/Comparisons.html; 2005

These charts were used to compare the symbols between all sources, and for end-of-sentence and end-of-chapter markers. I personally verified the WB symbols in these charts against several different references.

Key to Notations

Symbols used for the translation

• = end-of-line character appears in some source

(•) = symbol usually starts or ends a line

Of the 6 ancient sources (see Introduction), this translation uses WB except where the majority of the other sources disagree with it. The notations for these changes are :

( ) = WB symbol has been changed

__ = WB symbol has been deleted

[ ] = symbol not in WB has been added

The final English translation

Sections separated by blank lines are the opinion of the translator.

Raw translation

underline = verbatim translation

italics = interpreted translation; exact translation is to the far right in [brackets]

underlined italics = combined literal meanings from one symbol

underline[2] or *italics*[2] or *underlined italics*[2] =
2 symbols used to provide translation

{word} = equally likely translation of single symbol
[word] = symbol left out for grammatical clarity
[word] = word added for clarity that significantly influences the meaning of the sentence

word* = Confucian concept
word° = untranslatable; word is chosen for consistency

♦ = all symbols in the sentence are the same in all or all but one of the sources (sentence is identical or essentially identical across all sources); this does not account for different symbols with the same meaning!

Footnotes and cross-references

Differences between the sources are sometimes noted, but not every difference is noted.

Footnotes in *italics* provide my own possible interpretations of the more difficult passages, which you may certainly ignore!

Chapter One

• 道 可 道 非 常 道 •
名 可 名 非 常 名 •
無 名 天 地 之 始 •
有 名 萬 物 之 母 •
(•)故 常 無 欲 以 觀 其 妙 •
常 有 欲 以 觀 其 徼
此 兩 者 同 出 而 異 名
同 謂 之 玄
玄 之 又 玄
眾 妙 之 門

The Dao that can be spoken of is not the ever-constant Dao.
The name that can be named is not the ever-constant name.
That which is without-name is the beginning of heaven and earth.
That which possesses a name is the mother of the ten thousand creatures.

Therefore : always without-desire, thus you observe its subtle mystery.
Always possessing desires, thus you observe its external appearances.
These two, they arise from the same source but have different names;
This sameness is called their deep mystery.

Deep mysteries, and again deep mysteries –
The gateway of many subtle mysteries.

♦The Dao that can be spoken of is not the *ever-constant* Dao.
♦The name that can be named is not the *ever-constant* name.
[That which] is without-name is the beginning of heaven and earth.[A]
♦[That which] possesses a name is the mother of the ten thousand creatures.
Therefore : always without-desire, thus you observe its *subtle mystery*.
Always possessing desires, thus you observe its *external appearances*. [boundary,*surface*]
These two, they arise from the same [source][B] but have different names;
This sameness is called their *deep mystery*.
♦*Deep mysteries*, [→] *and again deep mysteries* –
The gateway of many *subtle mysteries*.

Notes :
A : this line and the next may just as likely be translated as
Non-being is named as the beginning of heaven and earth.
Being is named as the mother of the ten thousand creatures.
either way, compare to #40, where the world and the ten thousand creatures are created from being
B : literally, "they have the same arising"

Cross-references :
without-name : #32, #37, #41
mother : #20, #25, #52, #59
always/ever-constantly without X : #32, #34, #37
without-desire : #3, #34, #37, #57
mystery : #6, #10, #15, #27, #51, #56, #62, #65
mysterious sameness : #56
gateway : #6, #10, #52, #56

Chapter Two

天 下 皆 知 美 之 為 美 斯 惡 已 •
皆 知 善 之 為 善 斯 不 善 已 •
(•)故 有 無 相 生 •
難 易 相 成 •
長 短 相 較 •
高 下 相 傾 •
音 聲 相 和 •
前 後 相 隨 •
是 以 聖 人
處 無 為 之 事
行 不 言 之 教
萬 物 作 __ 而 不 (始) •
生 而 不 有
為 而 不 恃 •
功 成 而 弗 居 •
(•)夫 唯 弗 居 •
是 以 不 去 •

In the world, when all know that the action of beauty is beautiful, then ugliness ensues.
When all know that the action of good is goodness, then not-good ensues.

Therefore : being and non-being create each other,
Difficult and easy complete each other,
Long and short contrast each other,
High and low lean on each other,
Tone and voice harmonize each other,
Before and after follow each other.

Thus the sage :
Lives by using non-action in his duties,
And practicing no-talking in his teachings.

The ten thousand creatures arise, but do not have a beginning.
Creating but not possessing;
Acting, but not concerned with the results;
Accomplishing tasks, but not dwelling on them.

Now : only because there is no dwelling,
Thus the results do not depart.

In the world[2], when all know that the action of beauty is beautiful, then *ugliness*°{evil} *ensues*. [thereafter,afterwards]
When all know that the action of good is goodness, then not-good *ensues*. [thereafter,afterwards]
Therefore : being and non-being create each other,[A]
Difficult and easy complete each other,
Long{*lasting*} and short{brief} *contrast*[B] each other, [forever] [compare]
High{above} and low{below} lean on each other,[C]
Tone and voice{sound} harmonize each other,
Before{front} and after{back} follow each other.
Thus[2] the sage[2] :
Lives by [using] non-action in his duties,
And *practicing* no-talking in his teachings. [performs]
The ten thousand creatures arise, but do not have a beginning.
Creating but not possessing;[D]
♦Acting, but not *concerned with* [the results]; [depend upon,rely upon]
Accomplishing *tasks*, but not dwelling on them. [results,achievements]
Now : only because there is no dwelling,
♦Thus[2] [the results] do not depart.

Notes
A : compare to #40, where non-being creates being
B : FY, MWD, and GUO all have different words here (for example : “shape”, “form”, “mold”, etc.)
C : compare to #39, where low is the foundation of high
D : this line is missing in the earliest three sources; there is no indication in the original Chinese as to whether it is the sage or the creatures that are the ones acting in this and the following lines, so it is left ambiguous here as well

Cross-references
beauty *and* ugly : #20
non-being : #40, #43
tone *and* voice/sound (same symbol) : #41
non-action : #3, #37, #38, #43, #48, #57, #63, #64
  sage practices non-action : #43
teaching : #27, #42, #43
  no-talking in his teachings : #43
creates but does not possess : #10, #51
acting but not concerned : #10, #51, #77
accomplishing tasks : #9, #17, #34, #77
  and not dwelling on them : #9, #77

Chapter Three

不尚賢
使民不爭
不貴難得之貨
使民不為盜
不見可欲
使民心不亂 •
是以聖人之治 •
虛其心實其腹
弱其志強其骨
常使民無知無欲 •
使夫智者不敢為 __ •
為無為則無不治 [矣(•)] •

Not honoring those who are esteemable
Ensures that the citizens do not strive.
Not valuing rare goods
Ensures that the citizens do not act like thieves.
Not showing that which can be desired
Ensures that the citizens' heart/minds do not become
confused.

Thus the governing of the sage
Empties their heart/minds, fills their stomachs,
Weakens their ambitions, strengthens their bones.

By always ensuring that the citizens are
without-knowledge and without-desire,
Those who make men wise will not dare to act.

Act with non-action, then all will be governed!

Not honoring [those who are] *esteemable* [virtuous,talented]
Ensures that the citizens do not strive. [cause,make]
♦Not valuing rare[2] [→] goods
Ensures that the citizens do not act like thieves. [cause,make]
Not showing [that which] can be desired
Ensures that the citizens' *heart/minds* do not become
confused. [cause,make]
♦Thus[2] the governing of the sage[2]
♦Empties their *heart/minds*[A], *fills*° their stomachs,
♦Weakens their ambitions, strengthens their bones.
♦By always *ensuring* that the citizens are
without-knowledge and without-desire, [cause,make]
Those who make men wise*[B] will not dare to act.
Act with non-action, then all[2] will be governed !

Notes
A : *presumably of striving, greed, and confusion*
B : *presumably referring to Confucians*; earlier sources use the non-Confucian term "knowledgeable" instead of "wise"

Cross-references
no striving : #8, #22, #66, #68, #73, #81
rare goods : #12, #64
without-desire : #1, #34, #37, #57
weak : #29, #36, #40, #55, #76, #78
strong : #29, #30, #33, #36, #52, #55, #67, #78
not daring to act : #64, #67, #69
non-action : #2, #37, #38, #43, #48, #57, #63, #64
act with non-action : #63
anti-Confucian : #18, #19, #27, #33, #38

Chapter Four

<table>
<tr>
<td>
道 (盅) 而 用 之 (有) 不 盈 •
淵 兮 似 萬 物 之 宗 •
挫 其 銳 •
解 其 紛 •
和 其 光
同 其 塵
湛 兮 似 或 存 •
吾 不 知 誰 之 子 •
象 帝 之 先 •
</td>
<td>
Dao is like a cup or bowl, yet use it and there exists no need to fill it.
Profound and deep!, it appears to be the ancestor of the ten thousand creatures.

It blunts their sharpness,
Loosens their tangles,
Softens their brightness,
Makes them the same as the dust of the world.

Deep and profound!, it seems to barely exist.
I do not know whose child it is –
Its image came before that of god.
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>
Dao is like a *cup or bowl*[A], yet use it and there exists no [need to] fill it.
Profound and deep !, it appears to be the ancestor of the ten thousand creatures.
It *blunts* their sharpness, [dampens,subdues]
♦Loosens their tangles,[B]
♦Softens their brightness,[C]
♦Makes them the same as the *dust of the world*[D].
Deep and profound !, it seems to *barely* exist.[E] [might,maybe,perhaps]
I do not know whose [→] child it is –
♦Its image came before that of god{emperor}.
</td>
<td>
Notes
A : while the symbol used here only appears in one out of four sources, it gives the most straightforward translation; *Dao is like a cup in that its usefulness is in its emptiness (see #11 and #25)*
B : this line could just as likely be translated as Clarifies their confusion
C : compare to #58, where the sage is bright but does not dazzle
D : *according to Waley, “dust” is a metaphor for the “noise and fuss of everyday life”*
E : compare to #6, where the spirit of the valley also “seems to exist”

Cross-references
use does not exhaust : #5, #35
blunt the sharpness : #56
loosen the tangles : #56
soften the brightness : #56
dust of the world : #56
</td>
</tr>
</table>

Chapter Five

<table>
<tr>
<td>天 地 不 仁
以 萬 物 為 芻 狗 •
聖 人 不 仁 •
以 百 姓 為 芻 狗
天 地 之 間
其 猶 橐 籥 乎(•)
虛 而 不 屈
動 而 愈 出 •
多 言 數 窮
不 如 守 中</td>
<td>Heaven and earth are not kind –
Thus the ten thousand creatures become as straw dogs to them.
The sage is not kind –
Thus the 100 families become as straw dogs to him.

The space between heaven and earth,
How is it just like a bellows or flute?
It is empty, yet does not run out.
The more it moves, and the more it produces.

Too much talking is exceptionally exhausting,
Which is not as good as maintaining what is within.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦Heaven and earth are not kind* –
♦Thus the ten thousand creatures become as straw dogs[A] to them.
♦The sage[2] is not kind* –
♦Thus the 100 families become as straw dogs to him.
The space between [→] heaven and earth,
[How] is it just like a bellows or flute ?
♦It is empty, yet does not run out.
[subdue,submit,yield→give up,quit]
The more it moves, and the more it produces.
Too much talking is exceptionally exhausting,
Which is not as good as maintaining what is within.[B]</td>
<td>Notes
Only lines 5-8 are in GUO
A : Hall&Ames describe "straw dogs" as items that were carefully created for a sacrificial ritual, and treated with great respect during the ritual, but afterwards were casually tossed away and not given another thought
B : this sentence could just as likely end with "maintaining your center"

Cross-references
100 families : #17, #49
use does not exhaust : #4, #35</td>
</tr>
</table>

Chapter Six

谷 神 不 死
是 謂 玄 牝
玄 牝 之 門
是 謂 天 地 (之) 根 •
绵 绵 若 存
用 之 不 勤

The spirit of the valley does not die –
It is called the deep and mysterious feminine.

The gateway of this deep and mysterious feminine –
It is called the source of heaven and earth.

Unbroken, it seems to exist.
Using it takes no effort.

♦The spirit of the valley does not die[A] –
It is called the *deep and mysterious* feminine.
The gateway of this *deep and mysterious* feminine –
It is called the source of heaven and earth.
Unbroken[2], it seems to exist.[B]
Using it takes no *effort*. [diligence,hard work]

Notes
A : *the qualities ("spirit") of a valley (receptiveness, openness, emptiness) never leave it*
B : compare to #4, where Dao also "seems to barely exist"

Cross-references
die/death : #33, #42, #50, #67, #74, #75, #76, #80
valley : #15, #28, #32, #39, #41, #66
mystery : #1, #10, #15, #27, #51, #56, #62, #65
feminine : #10, #28, #61
gateway : #1, #10, #52, #56

Chapter Seven

天 長 地 久
天 地 所 以 能 長 且 久 者
以 其 不 自 生 •
(•)故 能 長 生 •
是 以 聖 人
後 其 身 而 身 先 •
外 其 身 而 身 存
非 以 其 無 私 邪(•) •
(•)故 能 成 其 私 •

Heaven is eternal, earth is enduring.
The reason that heaven and earth can be eternal and enduring
Is because they do not live for themselves.
Therefore they can live forever.

Thus the sage :
Puts his self behind others, yet finds his self before them.
Considers his self extraneous, yet his self survives.

Is this not because he has no self-interests?
Therefore he can achieve his self-interests.

♦Heaven is *eternal*, earth is *enduring*.
[forever] [for a long time]
♦The reason that[2] heaven and earth can be *eternal and enduring* [entities] [forever] [also] [for a long time]
♦Is because they do not live for themselves.[A]
♦Therefore they can live forever.
Thus[2] the sage[2] :
Puts his self behind others, yet finds his self before them.[B]
Considers his self *extraneous*, yet his self survives.
[foreign,external]
Is this not because he has no *self-interests* ? [selfish]
♦Therefore he can achieve his *self-interests*. [selfish]

Notes
A : while this translation is more consistent with the sentiments that follow it, an equally possible translation is
Is because they do not give themselves life
B : *presumably meaning leading them*; this line and the next are written in this awkward manner to emphasize that it is the personality or sense-of-self that is being talked about (in the translator's opinion – see the Introduction and cross-references below)

Cross-references
self : #9, #13, #16, #26, #44, #52, #54, #66
before/behind others : #66, #67

Chapter Eight

上 善 若 水
水 善 利 萬 物 而 不 爭
處 眾 人 之 所 惡
故 幾 於 道 [矣(•)] •
居 善 地
心 善 淵 •
與 善 仁
言 善 信 •
正 善 治 •
事 善 能
動 善 時 •
(•)夫 唯 不 爭 •
(•)故 無 尤 •

The highest virtue is like water –
Water’s virtue benefits the ten thousand creatures, yet it does not strive.
It dwells in places that everyone detests,
Therefore it is almost comparable to Dao!

In dwelling, the virtue is in the land.
In your heart/mind, the virtue is in being profound and deep.
In relations, the virtue is in being kind.
In speech, the virtue is in being truthful.
In governing, the virtue is in being honest and just.
In your duties, the virtue is in being competent.
In action, the virtue is in the timing.

Now : only because there is no striving,
Therefore there is no blame.

The highest virtue is like water –
Water’s virtue benefits the ten thousand creatures, yet it does not strive.
It dwells in places that everyone[2] detests,
Therefore it is almost comparable to Dao !
In dwelling, the virtue is in the land[A].
♦In your *heart/mind*, the virtue is in being *profound and deep*.
In *relations*, the virtue is in being kind*. [B]
[getting along with,participating]
In speech, the virtue is in being truthful*.
♦In governing, the virtue is in being *honest and just*.
♦In your duties, the virtue is in being competent.
♦In action, the virtue is in the timing.
♦Now : only because there is no striving,
♦Therefore there is no blame.

Notes
A : although it is best translated as “land” here, this is the same symbol for earth, as in “heaven and earth”
B : this could also be translated as
In giving, the virtue is in being kind
FY, MWD/A, and MWD/B all have differences in this sentence compared to WB and HSG and each other

Cross-references
be honest and just in governing : #57
no striving : #3, #22, #66, #68, #73, #81
only because there is no striving : #22

Chapter Nine

持 而 盈 之 不 如 其 已 揣 而 (銳) 之 不 可 長 保 • 金 玉 滿 堂 莫 之 能 守 • 富 貴 而 驕 自 遺 其 咎 • 功 遂 身 退 天 之 道 •	Holding and filling it Are not as good as your stopping short. Hammering and sharpening it Can not be forever maintained. When gold and jade fill a room, There is no one who can protect it. To have wealth and high rank, but with arrogance – Then naturally their loss is your own fault. When the task is successful, the self should let go of it. This is the Way of heaven.
Holding and filling it[A] Are not as good as *your* stopping [short]. [his] *Hammering*° and sharpening it[B] Can not be forever maintained. When gold and jade fill a room, There is no one *who* can protect it. [they] To have wealth and high rank, but with arrogance{pride} – Then naturally their loss is *your* own fault. [his] When the *task* is successful, the self should *let go* of it. [result,achievement] [withdraw,step away] ♦This is the Way of heaven.	Notes A : *presumably, a cup; Lau says that this refers to a vessel in a temple that stood upright when empty but overturned when nearly full (thus you had to hold it to fill it up)* B : *presumably, a sword or knife; you can only re-shape and re-sharpen it so many times* Cross-references accomplishing tasks : #2, #17, #34, #77 and not dwelling on them : #2, #77 self : #7, #13, #16, #26, #44, #52, #54, #66 Way of heaven : #47, #73, #77, #79, #81

Chapter Ten

載 營 魄 抱 一
能 無 離 乎(•)
專 氣 致 柔
能 嬰 兒 乎(•) •
滌 除 玄 覽
能 無 疵 乎(•)
愛 民 治 國
能 無 為 乎(•)
天 門 開 闔
能 為 雌 乎(•)
明 白 四 達
能 無 [以] 知 乎(•)
生 之 畜 之
生 而 不 有
為 而 不 恃
長 而 不 宰
是 謂 玄 德

Carrying and managing a body while embracing the One,
Are you able to not separate them?
Concentrating your Qi to become soft,
Are you able to be like a newborn infant?
Cleansing and clearing your deep and mysterious
perception,
Are you able to be without blemish?
Loving the citizens and governing the nation,
Are you able to use non-action?
Opening and closing the gateway of heaven,
Are you able to serve as the feminine?
Attaining clear insight in all directions,
Are you able to not use your knowledge?

Creating them and raising them,
Creating but not possessing,
Acting but not concerned with the results,
Leading yet not governing –
This is called deep and mysterious De.

♦Carrying and managing a body{soul} while embracing the One,
♦Are you able to not separate[A] them ?
♦Concentrating your Qi to *become* soft,
[attain,bring about]
♦Are you able to [be like] a newborn infant[2] ?
Cleansing and *clearing* your *deep and mysterious* perception,
[remove,eliminate,wipe out]
Are you able to be without blemish ?
Loving the citizens and governing the nation,
Are you able to [use] non-action ?
Opening and closing the gateway of heaven,
♦Are you able to serve as the feminine ?
♦Attaining clear *insight* in *all directions*,
[wise,sight] [four directions,all around]
Are you able to not use your knowledge ?
♦Creating them and raising them,
♦Creating but not possessing,
Acting but not *concerned with* [the results],[B]
[depend upon,rely upon]
♦Leading yet not governing –
♦This is called *deep and mysterious* De.

Notes
A : *that is,“keep from separating”*
B : this line is not in the earlier sources

Cross-references
embracing the One : #22
Qi : #42, #55
soft : #36, #43, #52, #55, #76, #78
gateway : #1, #6, #52, #56
baby/infant/child : #20, #28, #49, #55
newborn infant : #20, #28, #55
feminine : #6, #28, #61
creating but not possessing : #2, #51
acting but not concerned : #2, #51, #77
leading yet not governing : #51
mystery : #1, #6, #15, #27, #51, #56, #62, #65
deep and mysterious De : #51, #65

Chapter Eleven

三 十 輻 共 一 轂 當 其 無 有 車 之 用 • 埏 埴 以 為 器 當 其 無 有 器 之 用 • 鑿 戶 牖 以 為 室 當 其 無 有 室 之 用 • (•)故 有 之 以 為 利 無 之 以 為 用 •	Thirty spokes of a wheel share one hub; In its emptiness exists the usefulness of the cart. Mix water with clay thus making a vessel; In its emptiness exists the usefulness of the vessel. Cut out doors and windows thus making a room; In their emptiness exists the usefulness of the room. Therefore : what exists thus makes a thing profitable; Emptiness thus makes it useful.
Thirty[2] spokes of a wheel share one hub; ♦*In* its emptiness exists the usefulness of the cart. [just at] *Mix water with clay*[2] thus making a vessel; *In* its emptiness exists the usefulness of the vessel. [just at] *Cut out* doors and windows thus making a room{house}; [chisel,bore,pierce] ♦*In* their emptiness exists the usefulness of the room{house}. [just at] ♦Therefore : what exists thus makes *a thing* profitable; [it] ♦Emptiness thus makes it useful.	Notes Cross-references

Chapter Twelve

五 色 令 人 目 盲 •
五 音 令 人 耳 聾 •
五 味 令 人 口 爽
馳 騁 畋 獵 令 人 心 發 狂
難 得 之 貨 令 人 行 妨
是 以 聖 人 •
為 腹 不 為 目
(•)故 去 彼 取 此

The five colors can make people's eyes blind.
The five tones can make people's ears deaf.
The five flavors can make people's mouths dull.
Excessive hunting and horse racing can make people's heart/minds become wild.
Rare goods can make people's behavior corrupt.

Thus the sage :
Acts on what is inside, he does not act on what he sees.
Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.

♦The five colors [can] make people's eyes blind.
The five tones [can] make people's ears deaf.
The five flavors [can] make people's mouths *dull*°.
Excessive hunting and *horse racing* [can] make people's *heart/minds* become wild. [hunt hunt] [gallop[2]]
Rare[2] [→] goods [can] make people's behavior *corrupt*. [undermine,harm,impede]

Thus[2] the sage[2] :
Acts on what is inside, he does not act on what he sees.[A]
Therefore he leaves that[B] and chooses this[C].

Notes
Everything in the first five lines would have been enjoyed to excess only by the wealthy and the ruling class!
A : compare to #49, where the 100 families "follow their eyes"
B : *presumably, acting on what he sees*
C : *presumably, acting on what is inside*

Cross-references
rare goods : #3, #64
leaves that and chooses this : #38, #72

Chapter Thirteen

寵 辱 若 驚
貴 大 患 若 身 •
何 謂 寵 辱 若 驚
寵 為 下 得 之 若 驚
失 之 若 驚 •
是 謂 寵 辱 若 驚
何 謂 貴 大 患 若 身
吾 所 以 有 大 患 者 為 吾 有 身 •
及 吾 無 身 吾 有 何 患 (•)
(•)故 貴 以 身 為 天 下 •
若 可 [以] 寄 天 下 [矣(•)] •
愛 以 身 為 天 下
若 可 [以] 託 天 下 [矣(•)] •

Favor and disgrace seem alarming.
High rank brings great suffering if you have a self.

What is meant by "favor and disgrace seem alarming"?
Favor makes you the inferior, so gaining it seems alarming.
Losing it also seems alarming.
This is what is meant by "favor and disgrace seem alarming".

What is meant by "high rank brings great suffering if you have a self"?
I am the reason that I have great suffering, I who act like I have a self.
When I am without a self, how could I have suffering?

Therefore : he who is high ranking and uses his self to serve the world –
It seems he can thus be entrusted with the world!
He who is loving and uses his self to serve the world –
It seems he can thus be entrusted with the world!

♦Favor and disgrace seem alarming.
♦High rank brings great suffering if you have a self.
What is meant by "favor and disgrace seem alarming"?
Favor makes you the inferior[A], so gaining it seems alarming.
♦Losing it [also] seems alarming.
This is what is meant by "favor and disgrace seem alarming".
What is meant by "high rank brings great suffering if you have a self"?
♦I am the reason that[2] I have great suffering, I who act like I have a self.
When I am without a self, how could I have suffering?
Therefore : [he who] is high ranking and uses his self[B] to serve the world[2] –
It seems he can thus be entrusted with the world[2] !
♦[He who] is loving and uses his self to serve the world[2] –
It seems he can thus be entrusted with the world[2] !

Notes
A : *Ames&Hall point out that "favor" here means something that is bestowed upon you by a superior at their whim, thus it emphasizes your inferiority to them; and since it could be taken away just as easily, merely gaining it is cause for "alarm" (worry, anxiety, etc.)*
B : this is written in this awkward manner to emphasize that it is the personality or sense-of-self that is being talked about (in the translator's opinion – see the Introduction and cross-references below)

Cross-references
self : #7, #9, #16, #26, #44, #52, #54, #66
serve the world : #39, #49

Chapter Fourteen

視 之 不 見 名 曰 夷
聽 之 不 聞 名 曰 希
搏 之 不 得 名 曰 微 •
此 三 者 不 可 致 詰 •
(•)故 混 而 為 一
[一 者]
其 上 不 皦 •
其 下 不 昧 •
繩 繩 [兮] 不 可 名 •
復 歸 於 無 物 •
是 謂 無 狀 之 狀
無 物 之 象
是 謂 惚 恍
迎 之 不 見 其 首
隨 之 不 見 其 後
執 古 之 道
以 御 今 之 有 •
能 知 古 始
是 謂 道 紀

Look, it is not seen; its name is called elusive.
Listen, it is not heard; its name is called tenuous.
Grasp, it is not gotten; its name is called subtle and obscure.
These three things can not be investigated any further –
Therefore they blend and become one.

This one thing :
Its highest point is not bright;
Its lowest point is not dark.
Continuous and unending!, it can not be named;
It returns to non-existence.
It is called the form of that which is without-form;
The image of non-existence.
It is called confusing and indistinct.
Meet it and you do not see its beginning;
Follow it and you do not see its end.

Hold fast to the Way of the ancients
In order to master the present moment.
The ability to know the ancient beginning –
This is called the main principle of Dao.

Look, it is not seen; its name is called *elusive*°.
Listen, it is not heard; its name is called *tenuous*. [rare]
Grasp, it is not gotten; its name is called
subtle and obscure.
These three *things* can not be investigated any *further* –
[entities] [finer,closer]
♦Therefore they blend and become one.
This one *thing* :[A] [entity]
Its highest point is not bright;
Its lowest point is not dark.
Continuous and unending[2] !, it can not be named;
♦It returns[2] to non-*existence*. [thing-ness]
It is called the form of [that which] is without-form;
♦The image of non-*existence*. [thing-ness]
It is called confusing and indistinct.[B]
Meet it and you do not see its beginning;
Follow it and you do not see its *end*. [back,rear]
Hold fast to the Way of the ancients
In order to *master* the *present moment* [3].
[control,manage] [present 's existence]
The ability to know the ancient beginning –
This is called the *main principle*[C] of Dao. [discipline]

Notes
A : Only WB and HSG dropped this line
B : compare to #21, where Dao is also confusing and indistinct, and to #40, where Dao specifically "returns" and "weakens"
C : according to Waley, 紀 literally means "main thread" (as in "of the teaching"), so "principle" seems more appropriate than the modern definition of simply "discipline"

Cross-references
look, not seen *and* listen, not heard : #35
tenuous : #41
returning : #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80
confusing *and* indistinct : #21
the ancients/elders : #15, #22, #38, #39, #62, #65, #68

Chapter Fifteen

古 之 善 為 士 者 微 妙 玄 通
深 不 可 識 •
(•)夫 唯 不 可 識
(•)故 強 為 之 容 •
豫 兮 若 冬 涉 川 •
猶 兮 若 畏 四 鄰 •
儼 兮 其 若 (客) •
渙 兮 若 冰 __ 將 釋 •
敦 兮 其 若 樸 •
曠 兮 其 若 谷
混 兮 其 若 濁 •
孰 能 濁 以 靜 之 徐 清 •
孰 能 安 以 久 動 之 徐 生
保 此 道 者 不 欲 盈
(•)夫 唯 不 盈
(是) [以] 能 蔽 [而] 不 __ 成

The virtue of the ancients made they who were scholars
subtle, mysterious, obscure, deep, and penetrating.
Their mysterious depths can not be understood.

Now : only because they can not be understood,
Therefore we try to emulate their appearance :
Hesitant!, as if crossing a winter stream.
Wary!, as if afraid of their neighbors all around.
Respectful!, they are like a visiting guest.
Yielding!, like ice that is about to to break off.
Honest and genuine!, they are like the uncarved block.
Wide and open!, they are like a valley.
Unclear!, they are like muddy water.

Who can take muddy water and use stillness to slowly and
gently make it pure and clear?
Who can take what is tranquil and use continual movement
to slowly and gently bring it to life?

He who maintains this Way does not desire to be full.
Now : only because he is not full,
Thus he can be hidden and unfinished.

The virtue of the ancients made they who were scholars
subtle, mysterious, obscure, deep, and penetrating[4].
Their *mysterious depths* can not be understood.
Now : only because they can not be understood,
Therefore we try to *emulate* their appearance :
[act like,become]
Hesitant !, as if crossing a winter stream.
Wary !, as if afraid of their neighbors all around.
[scheming]
Respectful !, they are like a *visiting guest*.
Yielding° !, like ice that is about to to *break off*.
[release,disperse]
Honest and genuine !, they are like the uncarved block.
Wide and open !, they are like a valley.
Unclear !, they are like muddy water.[A] [confused,muddy]
Who can take muddy water and use stillness to
slowly and gently make it *pure and clear*[B]?
Who can take what is tranquil and use *continual* movement
to *slowly and gently* bring it to life? [for a long time]
He who maintains this Way does not desire to be full.
Now : only because he is not full,
Thus[2] he can be hidden and *unfinished*[2]. [not finish]

Notes
The last two lines are not present in GUO
A : *in this sentence and the next, "muddy water" appears to be a metaphor for one's state of mind, thus referring to churned-up thoughts and feelings*
B : *apparently referring to a purity and clarity of the heart/mind*

Cross-references
the ancients/elders : #14, #22, #38, #39, #62, #65, #68
virtue of the ancients : #65
scholar : #41, #68
mystery : #1, #6, #10, #27, #51, #56, #62, #65
fear/afraid : #17, #20, #72, #74
uncarved block : #19, #28, #32, #37, #57
valley : #6, #28, #32, #39, #41, #66
stillness : #16, #26, #37, #45, #57, #61
he who "possesses Dao" : #23, #24, #31, #65, #77
hidden : #41

Chapter Sixteen

致 虛 極 •
守 靜 篤 •
萬 物 並 作
吾 以 觀 [其] 復 •
(•)夫 物 芸 芸 各 復 歸 其 根 •
歸 根 曰 靜
[靜] 是 謂 復 命
復 命 曰 常 •
知 常 曰 明 •
不 知 常 妄 作 凶
知 常 容
容 乃 公
公 乃 王
王 乃 天
天 乃 道
道 乃 久
沒 身 不 殆

Attain the utmost emptiness.
Maintain a profound stillness.

The ten thousand creatures arise in unison,
And thus I observe their return.
Now : all the myriad creatures return to their source.
Returning to the source speaks of stillness.
Stillness is called returning to the natural order.
Returning to the natural order speaks of the ever-constant.

Knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight.
Not knowing the ever-constant is foolish and creates misfortune.

Knowing the ever-constant leads to tolerance.
Being tolerant leads to being just and unbiased.
Being just and unbiased leads to being kingly.
Being kingly leads to heaven.
Heaven leads to Dao.
Dao leads to what endures.

When the self disappears, there can be no danger.

Attain the utmost emptiness.
Maintain a *profound* stillness. [sincere,devoted,true]
The ten thousand creatures arise in *unison*, [together,simultaneously]
And thus I observe their return.
Now : all the *myriad* creatures return[2] to their source. [multitudinous[2]]
Returning to the source speaks of stillness.
Stillness is called returning to the *natural order*. [order,destiny,fate]
Returning to the *natural order* speaks of the *ever-constant*. [order,destiny,fate]
Knowing the *ever-constant* speaks of *insight*. [wise,sight]
Not knowing the *ever-constant* is foolish and *creates misfortune*. [arise,makes] [unfortunate,evil]
♦Knowing the *ever-constant* [leads to] *tolerance*. [allow,permit,forbear]
♦Being *tolerant leads to* being *just and unbiased*. [allow,permit,forbear] [thereupon,*consequently*]
♦Being *just and unbiased leads to* being kingly. [thereupon,*consequently*]
♦Being kingly *leads to* heaven. [thereupon,*consequently*]
♦Heaven *leads to* Dao. [thereupon,*consequently*]
♦Dao *leads to* what *endures*. [thereupon,*consequently*] [for a long time]
♦When the self disappears, there can be no danger.

Notes
Only the first five lines of the entire chapter are present in GUO

Cross-references
stillness : #15, #26, #37, #45, #57, #61
returning : #14, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80
knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight : #55
self : #7, #9, #13, #26, #44, #52, #54, #66
no danger : #25, #32, #44, #52
when the self disappears, there can be no danger : #52

Chapter Seventeen

太 上 下 知 有 之
其 次 親 而 譽 之
其 次 畏 之
其 次 侮 之
信 不 足 焉 有 不 信 __
(猶) 兮 其 貴 言 •
功 成 事 遂
百 姓 皆 謂 我 自 然 •

The existence of the best ruler is barely known to the people.
Next is one who they love and praise.
Next is one who they fear.
Next is one who they ridicule.

If the ruler does not trust enough, then he will not have anyone’s trust.

Thoughtful!, he values his words.

When tasks are accomplished and duties are successful,
The 100 families all say “we are naturally so”.

The existence of the *best ruler*[2A] [,he] is *barely* known [to the people]. [highest superior] [below,inferior]
Next is *one* who they love and praise. [him]
♦Next is *one* who they fear. [him]
Next is *one* who they ridicule. [him]
If [the ruler] does not trust* enough, then he will not have anyone’s trust*.
Thoughtful !, he values his words.[B] [scheming]
When *tasks* are accomplished and duties are successful, [results,achievements]
The 100 families all say “we are naturally so[2]”.[C]

Notes
A : 太 上 literally means “highest superior”, which is also a euphemism for the emperor (and so is extrapolated to rulers in general)
B : *in other words, he does not offer them lightly or often*; this line is very difficult to translate, because WB uses a unique first symbol, while HSG&FY and GUO&MWD/B each use different symbols; however, the two earlier symbols can both mean “to scheme”, thus making a 4/5 majority in meaning; the rest of the sentence is so terse that it can be translated in numerous ways as well
C : *under the proper rulership, everyone thinks everything just naturally works out right*

Cross-references
fear/afraid : #15, #20, #72, #74
not trusting enough : #23
accomplishing tasks : #2, #9, #34, #77
100 families : #5, #49
naturally so : #23, #25, #51, #64

Chapter Eighteen

<table>
<tr>
<td>
大 道 廢 •
有 仁 義
慧智 出 •
有 大 偽
六 親 不 和
有 孝 慈
國 家 昏 亂 •
有 忠 臣
</td>
<td>
When the great Dao is abandoned,
There exists kindness and morality.

When intelligence and wisdom arise,
There exists a great deal of deception.

When the six relationships are not in harmony,
There exists devoted children and loving parents.

When the nation and the families are very confused,
There exists loyal officials.
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>
When the great Dao is abandoned,
There exists kindness* and *morality*. [righteousness]
When intelligence and wisdom*[A] arise,
There exists a great deal of *deception*[B]. [false,fake]
When the six relationships*[C] are not in harmony,
There exists *devoted children** and *loving parents**.
When the nation and the families are *very confused*[2],
There exists loyal* officials{ministers,subjects}.
</td>
<td>
Notes
By looking at all the sources, it is easy to see that this chapter grew more anti-Confucian over time!
A : the MWD texts use “knowledge” (a non-Confucian term) instead of “wisdom”; this whole sentence is absent in GUO
B : this symbol could also be interpreted as hypocrisy, pretense, lying, dishonesty, etc.
C : the six relationships refer to “all” the possible kinds of relationship in a family (in ancient China) : husband to wife, wife to husband, father to son, son to father, older brother to younger brother, younger brother to older brother

Cross-references
great Dao : #34, #53
nation *and* families : #57
anti-Confucian : #3, #19, #27, #33, #38
</td>
</tr>
</table>

Chapter Nineteen

絕 聖 棄 智
民 利 百 倍 •
絕 仁 棄 義
民 復 孝 慈 •
絕 巧 棄 利
盜 賊 無 有 •
此 三 者以 為 文 不 足 •
(•)故 令 有 所 屬 •
見 素
抱 樸
少 私
寡 欲 •

Renounce sacredness, abandon wisdom,
And the citizens benefit 100-fold.
Renounce kindness, abandon morality,
And the citizens return to being devoted children and loving parents.
Renounce cleverness, abandon profit,
And thieves and bandits will not exist.

These three things thus make a civilized society, but are not enough.

Therefore : to ensure the citizens have a place to belong –
See the simplicity,
Embrace the concept of the uncarved block,
Less selfishness,
Fewer desires.

Renounce sacredness, abandon wisdom*,
♦And the citizens benefit 100-fold.
Renounce kindness*, abandon *morality**, [righteousness]
And the citizens return to being *devoted children** and *loving parents**.
Renounce cleverness, abandon profit,
And thieves and bandits{traitors} will not exist.
These three *things* thus make a *civilized society*, but are not enough. [entities] [formal,polite,culture]
Therefore : to *ensure* [the citizens] have a place to belong[A] – [make,cause]
See the simplicity,
Embrace the [concept of the] uncarved block,
Less selfishness,
Fewer desires.

Notes
GUO is significantly different about what to renounce or abandon, and the results, and it uses no Confucian terms; as early as MWD/B and MWD/A some Confucian terms had appeared
A : *perhaps meaning a place* ***worth*** *belonging to?*

Cross-references
returning : #14, #16, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80
thieves *and* bandits : #57
uncarved block : #15, #28, #32, #37, #57
anti-Confucian : #3, #18, #27, #33, #38

Chapter Twenty

絕 學 無 憂 唯 之 與 阿 相 去 幾 何 (美) 之 與 惡 相 去 若 何 人 之 所 畏 不 可 不 畏 • 荒 兮 其 未 央 哉(•) 眾 人 熙 熙 如 享 太 牢 • 如 春 登 臺 我 獨 泊 兮(•) 其 未 兆 如 嬰 兒 之 未 孩 儽 儽 兮 若 無 所 歸 眾 人 皆 有 餘 __ 我 獨 若 遺 我 愚 人 之 心 也 哉 (•) 沌 沌 兮 俗 人 昭 昭 我 獨 (若) 昏 (•) 俗 人 察 察 我 獨 悶 悶 (•) 澹 兮 其 若 海 (漂) 兮 若 無 [所] 止 眾 人 皆 有 以 __ 我 獨 頑 似 鄙 我 獨 異 於 人 而 貴 食 母	Renounce learning and be without worry. "Yes" together with "yeah" – What is their mutual distance or nearness? Beautiful together with ugliness – What is their mutual distance or similarity? That which people fear, they are not able to not fear. How ridiculous! They are not yet centered! Everyone is very festive, As if enjoying the Tai Lao sacrifice, As if climbing terraces in the spring. I alone am unmoved! – Like one who has not yet given any sign, Like a newborn infant who does not yet act like a baby. Very tired and worn out!, as if without a place to return to. Everyone all has more than they need; I alone seem to have lost everything. I have the heart/mind of a foolish person, indeed!! I am very mixed up and confused! Common people are very clear and bright; I alone seem confused. Common people are very observant and alert; I alone am very gloomy and depressed. Tranquil!, they are like the ocean; I drift on the wind!, as if without a place to rest. Everyone all has a purpose; I alone am stupid and stubborn, and appear mean and shallow. I alone am different compared to other people, And value the food of the mother.

Renounce learning and be without worry.[A]
"Yes" [→] together with "yeah"[B] –
What is their mutual distance or *nearness*°?
Beautiful{good} [→] together with *ugliness*°{evil} –
What is their mutual distance or similarity?
That which people [they] fear, they are not able to not fear.
How ridiculous ! They are not yet centered !
♦Everyone[2] is [very] *festive*, [splendid,merry[2]]
As if enjoying the Tai Lao sacrifice[C],
As if climbing terraces[D] in the spring.
I alone am *unmoved* ! – [anchored]
Like one *who* has not yet given any sign, [his]
Like a newborn infant[2] *who* does not yet [act like] a baby. [him]
[Very] *tired and worn out*[2] !, as if without a place to return to.
♦Everyone[2] all has *more than they need*; [surplus,excess]
I alone seem to have *lost everything*. [things lost]
I have the heart/mind of a foolish person, indeed! !
I am [very] *mixed up and confused*[2] !
Common people are [very] *clear and bright*[2];
I alone seem[E] confused.
Common people are [very] *observant and alert*[2];
I alone am [very] *gloomy and depressed*[2].
Tranquil !, they are like the ocean;
[I] drift [on the wind][F] !, as if without a place to rest.
♦Everyone[2] all has a *purpose*; [use]
I alone am *stupid and stubborn*, and appear *mean and shallow*{rustic}.
I alone am different compared to other people,
And value the food of the mother.

Notes

This chapter seems to be the sage-like author poking fun at himself, describing how he ***appears*** *to ordinary people who don't understand him*; the "very's" scattered throughout the chapter are implied by repeated symbols; only the first 6 lines are present in GUO

A : many people over the centuries have suggested that this line should be the last in #19 for many good reasons; however, there is an explicit end-of-chapter marker in GUO at the end of #19 (which is not even followed by #20 in its manuscript), so this line does indeed seem to belong here

B : formal versus informal, respectively

C : *according to Lau, the Tai Lao sacrifice was a major feast where sheep, pigs, and ox were ritually sacrificed and eaten*

D : in ancient China, terraces were man-made hills with paths cut into in their sides, leading up to a plateau at the top from which to view the surrounding landscape

E : only WB changed "seem" to "confused", thus making "very confused", keeping with all the other "very's"

F : "drift" comes from HSG and FY (while they use different symbols, they have the same meaning, thus making a majority); the symbol in WB means "wind", and so is incorporated into the added phrase; the "I" is added at the beginning to maintain the I/they alternation

Cross-references

beauty *and* ugly : #2
fear/afraid : #15, #17, #72, #74
baby/infant/child : #10, #28, #49, #55
newborn infant : #10, #28, #55
returning : #14, #16, #19, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80
observant and alert : #58
mother : #1, #25, #52, #59

Chapter Twenty One

孔 德 之 容 (唯) 道 是 從
道 之 為 物 (唯) 恍 (唯) 惚
惚 兮 恍 兮 其 中 有 象 •
恍 兮 惚 兮 其 中 有 物 •
窈 兮 冥 兮 其 中 有 精 •
其 精 甚 真
其 中 有 信
自 (今) 及 (古)
其 名 不 去
以 閱 眾 甫 •
吾 何 以 知 眾 甫 之 (然) 哉 (•)
以 此 •

The greatest De is possible only when Dao is followed.

The action of Dao on creatures is just indistinct, just confusing.
Confusing! and indistinct!, within it exists image.
Indistinct! and confusing!, within it exists things.
Obscure! and dark!, within it exists essence.
Its essence is extremely real and true.
Within it exists truth.

From the present, reaching to antiquity,
Its name has not departed –
Thus I observe the father of the multitudes.
How do I thus know the father of the multitudes is like this?
By means of this.

♦The greatest De [it] is *possible* only when Dao is followed. [allowed,permitted]
The action of Dao on creatures is *just* indistinct, *just* confusing.[A] [only] [only]
Confusing ! and indistinct !, within it exists image.
Indistinct ! and confusing !, within it exists things.
Obscure ! and dark !, within it exists essence.
Its essence is extremely *real and true*.
♦Within it exists truth*.
From the present, reaching to *antiquity*, [since] [ancient,old]
Its name has not departed –
Thus I *observe* the father of the multitudes. [examine,inspect]
How do I thus know the father of the multitudes [it] is like this ?
♦By means of this[B].

Notes
A : compare to #14, where something (*presumably Dao*) is also indistinct and confusing, and to #40, where Dao specifically “returns” and “weakens”
B : *“this” could be referring to observing the action of Dao, or just observing the world in front of you, or to the teachings of the DDJ, or something else – you decide!*

Cross-references
confusing *and* indistinct : #14
essence : #55
how do I thus know : #54, #57
by means of this : #54, #57

Chapter Twenty Two

<table>
<tr>
<td>曲 則 全 •
枉 則 直 •
窪 則 盈
敝 則 新 •
少 則 得 •
多 則 惑 •
是 以 聖 人
抱 一 [以] 為 天 下 式
不 自 見 故 明
不 自 是 故 彰
不 自 伐 故 有 功 •
不 自 矜 故 長 •
(•)夫 唯 不 爭
(•)故 天 下 莫 能 與 之 爭
古 之 所 謂
曲 則 全 者
豈 虛 言 哉 (•) •
誠 全 而 歸 之</td>
<td>What is wrong then becomes whole and perfect.
What is bent then becomes straight.
What is hollow then becomes filled.
What is worn out then becomes new.
Have little, then gain.
Have too much, then become confused.

Thus the sage :
Embraces the One, thus serving as an example to the world –
He does not display himself, therefore he has insight.
Does not consider himself correct, therefore he distinguishes himself.
Does not boast about himself, therefore he possesses merit.
Does not brag about himself, therefore he endures.

Now : only because he does not strive,
Therefore no one in the world can strive against him.

That which the ancients say :
“He who is wrong then becomes whole and perfect” –
How can these be empty words?
Be truly whole and perfect, and return to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦What is wrong{bent} then becomes whole and perfect.
What is bent then becomes straight.
♦What is hollow then becomes filled.
♦What is worn out then becomes new.
♦Have little, then gain.
♦Have too much, then become confused.
♦Thus[2] the sage[2] :
Embraces the One, thus serving as an example to the world[2] –
He does not display himself, therefore he has insight.
[show] [wise,sight]
Does not consider himself correct, therefore he distinguishes himself. [manifest,display→stand out]
♦Does not boast about himself, therefore he possesses merit.
Does not brag about himself, therefore he endures{leads}.
[boast] [long,forever]
♦Now : only because he does not strive,
Therefore no one in the world[2] can strive against him.
[together with]
♦That which the ancients [they] say :
“He who is wrong{bent} then becomes whole and perfect” –
How can these be empty words ?
Be truly whole and perfect, and return to it[A].</td>
<td>Notes
A : there is no indication what the “it” is referring to in the original Chinese, so you decide! This symbol also means “them”, perhaps meaning “return to the ancients”?

Cross-references
embraces the One : #10
serves as an example to the world : #28
not displaying oneself (showing off) : #24, #47, #72, #77
display…insight : #24
correct…distinguishes : #24
boast : #24, #30
boast…merit : #24
brag : #24, #30
brag…endures : #24
no striving : #3, #8, #66, #68, #73, #81
no one in the world can strive against him : #66
the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #38, #39, #62, #65, #68
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80</td>
</tr>
</table>

Chapter Twenty Three

<table>
<tr>
<td>
希 言 自 然
(•)故 飄 風 不 終 朝
驟 雨 不 終 日•
孰 為 此 者 天 地 •
天 地 尚 不 能 久
而 況 於 人 乎(•)
(•)故 從 事 於 道 者
道 者 同 於 道
德 者 同 於 德
失 者 同 於 失 •
同 於 道 者
道 亦 樂 得 之
同 於 德 者
德 亦 樂 得 之
同 於 失 者
失 亦 樂 得 之
信 不 足 焉 有 不 信 __
</td>
<td>
Minimal words are naturally so.
Therefore : strong winds do not last the entire morning,
Sudden rains do not last the entire day.

Who makes these things? Heaven and earth.
Even heaven and earth can not maintain them forever,
And so how much less can people?

Therefore : of those who engage in Dao –
He who Daos is one with Dao.
He who Des is one with De.
He who loses is one with the loss.

For he who is one with Dao,
Dao is also pleased to have him.
For he who is one with De,
De is also pleased to have him.
For he who is one with loss,
Loss is also pleased to have him.

If you do not trust enough, then you will not have anyone's trust.
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>
♦Minimal words are naturally so[2]. [rare,infrequent]
Therefore : strong winds[2] do not last the entire morning{day}, [whirlwind,cyclone wind]
♦Sudden rains do not last the entire day.
Who makes these things? Heaven and earth. [entities]
Even heaven and earth can not maintain them forever, [for a long time]
And so how much less can people ? [than]
Therefore : of those who engage[2] in Dao –
He who Daos is one with[2] Dao. [same compared to→same as]
♦He who Des is one with[2] De. [same compared to]
♦He who loses is one with[2] the loss. [same compared to]
For he who is one with[2] Dao, [same compared to]
Dao is also pleased to have him. [gain,get]
For he who is one with[2] De, [same compared to]
De is also pleased to have him.[A] [gain,get]
For he who is one with[2] loss, [same compared to]
Loss is also pleased to have him. [gain,get]
If you do not trust* enough, then you will not have anyone's trust*.
</td>
<td>
Notes
A : this sentence and the next are very different across the sources, and the sentence before (about Dao) is not in the MWD's

Cross-references
naturally so : #17, #25, #51, #64
he who "possesses Dao" : #15, #24, #31, #65, #77
not trusting enough : #17
</td>
</tr>
</table>

Chapter Twenty Four

<table>
<tr>
<td>企 者 不 立
跨 者 不 行
自 見 者 不 明
自 是 者 不 彰 •
自 伐 者 無 功
自 矜 者 不 長
其 在 道 也(•)
曰 餘 食 贅 行 •
物 或 惡 之
(•)故 有 道 者 不 處 •</td>
<td>He who stands on tiptoe does not really stand.
He who stands astride can not travel.
He who displays himself does not have insight.
He who considers himself correct does not distinguish himself.
He who boasts about himself is without merit.
He who brags about himself does not endure.

He who lives in Dao –
Calls these leftover food and unnecessary behavior.
Creatures detest them, no matter what.
Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live by them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He who stands on tiptoe does not [really] stand.
He who stands astride can not travel.
♦He who displays himself does not have insight.
[shows] [wise,sight]
♦He who considers himself correct does not distinguish himself. [manifest,display→stand out]
♦He who boasts about himself is without merit.
♦He who brags about himself does not endure{lead}.
[boasts] [long,forever]
♦He [who] lives in Dao –
♦Calls these leftover food[A] and unnecessary behavior.
[excess, remainder]
♦Creatures detest them, no matter what.
Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live by[B] them.</td>
<td>Notes
A : presumably, the inedible scraps (not something good, as in "leftover turkey")
B : there is some debate over the last symbol in this line – both FY and HSG use this symbol (making it a majority), and some WB versions also use it; other WB versions use 处, thus reading
he who possesses Dao does not dwell with them

Cross-references
not displaying oneself (showing off) : #22, #47, #72, #77
display…insight : #22
correct…distinguishes : #22
boast : #22, #30
boast…merit : #22
brag : #22, #30
brag…endure : #22
creatures detest them : #31
he who "possesses Dao" : #15, #23, #31, #65, #77</td>
</tr>
</table>

Chapter Twenty Five

有 物 混 成 先 天 地 生 寂 兮 寥 兮 獨 立 不 改 周 行 而 不 殆 可 以 為 天 下 母 吾 不 知 其 名 • 字 之 曰 道 強 為 之 名 曰 大 大 曰 逝 逝 曰 遠 遠 曰 反 (•)__ 道 大 天 大 地 大 王 亦 大 域 中 有 四 大 而 王 居 其 一 焉 • 人 法 地 地 法 天 天 法 道 道 法 自 然 •	Something existed unformed yet complete, Before heaven and earth were created. Silent! Empty! Standing alone, not changing. It circulates everywhere, and causes no danger. It can be considered the mother of the world. I do not know its name; Its symbol is called Dao. If I tried to make its name, I would call it great. Being great speaks of departing. Departing speaks of being remote. Being remote speaks of returning. Dao is great, Heaven is great, Earth is great, The king is also great. Within the realm exist four that are great, And the king resides as one of them! People follow the earth. The earth follows heaven. Heaven follows Dao. Dao follows what is naturally so.

[Some]thing existed *unformed* yet complete,
[mingled,blended,*unstructured*]
♦Before heaven and earth were created.
Silent ! Empty !
Standing alone, not changing.
It *circulates everywhere*[2], and [causes][A] no danger.
It can be considered[2] the mother of the world[2].
I do not know its name;
Its symbol is called Dao.
If I tried to make its name, I would call it great.
Being great speaks of departing.
Departing speaks of being remote.
Being remote speaks of returning.
♦Dao is great,
♦Heaven is great,
♦Earth is great,
♦The king is also great.
Within the *realm* exist four that are great, [region,territory]
And the king resides as one of them !
♦People follow[B] the earth.
♦The earth follows heaven.
♦Heaven follows Dao.
♦Dao follows what is naturally so[2].

Notes

A : "is in" could also be used here, but as the subject is Dao, this seems unlikely; this sentence is not in the three earliest sources

B : "follow" as in "emulates" or "uses as a model for their own behavior"

Cross-references

no danger : #16, #32, #44, #52
mother : #1, #20, #52, #59
    mother of the world : #52
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80
remote : #65
    remote *and* returning : #65
naturally so : #17, #23, #51, #64

Chapter Twenty Six

重 為 輕 根
靜 為 躁 君
是 以 (君 子) 終 日
行 不 離 [其] 輜
重 雖 有 榮 觀 燕
處 超 然
奈 何 萬 乘 之 主
而 以 身 輕 天 下
輕 則 失 本
躁 則 失 君

Serious serves as the source of frivolous.
Stillness serves as the ruler of restlessness.

Thus the noble man travels the entire day,
And does not stray from his wagon.
He is serious, even though glorious sights and feasts exist;
He lives above them, like this.

So how could one be the master of ten thousand chariots,
And conduct his self frivolously in the world?

Be frivolous, then lose the source.
Be restless, then lose the rulership.

♦Serious{heavy} serves as the source of frivolous{light}.
♦Stillness serves as the ruler of restlessness[A].
Thus[2] the noble man[2*B] travels the entire day,
And does not *stray* from his wagon. [leave,depart,separate]
He is serious[C], even though glorious sights and feasts exist;
He lives *above them*, like this[D]. [transcend,jump over]
[So] how[2] could [one be] the master of ten thousand chariots,[E]
And *conduct* his self [F] frivolously{lightly} in the world[2]? [use]

Be frivolous{light}, then lose the source.
♦Be restless, then lose the rulership.

Notes
A : this symbol also means impatience, agitation, anxiety, etc; *“stillness” and “restlessness” are presumably referring to inner, mental/emotional qualities*
B : Only WB and HSG changed “noble man” to the non-Confucian term “sage”
C : traditionally, the first symbol of this sentence is considered to be the last symbol of the previous sentence (“heavy wagon”); but because the MWD’s have “fields” instead of “wagon” at the end of the previous sentence, and “heavy fields” makes no sense, it is parsed this way
D : *presumably, by being serious and still*
E : *someone very important, such as the supreme ruler of a large nation (one with 10,000 chariots)*
F : this is written in this awkward manner to emphasize that it is the personality or sense-of-self that is being talked about (in the translator’s opinion – see the Introduction and cross-references below)

Cross-references
stillness : #15, #16, #37, #45, #57, #61
stillness *and* restlessness : #45
noble man : #31
self : #7, #9, #13, #16, #44, #52, #54, #66

Chapter Twenty Seven

善行無轍迹
善言無瑕謫
善數不用籌策
善閉無關楗而不可開•
善結無纆約而不可解•
是以聖人
常善救人
故無棄人
常善救物
故無棄物•
是謂襲明
(•)故善人者不善人之師
不善人者善人之資•
不貴其師
不愛其資
雖智大迷
是謂要妙

A good traveler is without wagon track or footprint.
A good speaker is without flaw or disgrace.
A good accountant does not use counting tokens.
A good barrier is without bar or lock, yet can not be opened.
A good binding is without cord or restraint, yet can not be loosened.

Thus the sage :
Is always good at helping people,
Therefore he does not abandon people.
Is always good at helping creatures,
Therefore he does not abandon creatures.
This is called following your insight.

Therefore : he who is a virtuous person is the teacher of he who is not a virtuous person.
He who is not a virtuous person is the resource of he who is a virtuous person.
If the latter does not value his teacher,
Or the former does not love his resource,
Even if there is wisdom, there will be great confusion.
This is called the essential subtle mystery.

A good traveler is without [wagon] track[A] or footprint.
A good speaker is without flaw{fault} or disgrace{blame}.
A good *accountant* does not use *counting tokens*[2].
[counter] [token method]
A good *barrier* is
without bar or lock, yet can not be opened. [obstruction,blockage]
A good binding is without cord or restraint, yet can not be loosened.
♦Thus[2] the sage[2] :
Is always good at helping people,
Therefore he does not abandon people.
Is always good at helping creatures,
Therefore he does not abandon creatures.
This is called following your *insight*. [wise,sight]
Therefore : he who is a virtuous person is the teacher of [he who] is not a virtuous person.
He who is not a virtuous person is the *resource* of [he who] is a virtuous person. [wealth,supply,support]
♦[If the latter] does not value his teacher,
♦[Or the former] does not love his *resource*,
[wealth,supply,support]
Even if there is wisdom*, there will be great confusion.
This is called the essential *subtle mystery*.

Notes
A: this symbol also has the connotation of "rut", hence the track of a vehicle

Cross-references
one who is not virtuous : #49, #62, #81
teaching : #2, #42, #43
mystery : #1, #6, #10, #15, #51, #56, #62, #65
anti-Confucian : #3, #18, #19, #33, #38

Chapter Twenty Eight

知 其 雄 守 其 雌
為 天 下 谿
為 天 下 谿
常 德 不 離
復 歸 於 嬰 兒
知 其 白 守 其 黑 •
為 天 下 式
為 天 下 式
常 德 不 忒
復 歸 於 無 極
知 其 榮 守 其 辱
為 天 下 谷
為 天 下 谷
常 德 乃 足
復 歸 於 樸 •
樸 散 則 為 器
聖 人 用 之 則 為 官 長
(•)故 大 制 不 割

Know your maleness, but maintain your femaleness.
Serve as a stream to the world.
Serving as a stream to the world,
The ever-constant De will not depart,
Returning you to the state of the newborn infant.

Know your brightness, but maintain your darkness.
Serve as an example to the world.
Serving as an example to the world,
The ever-constant De will not falter,
Returning you to the state of the limitless.

Know your honor, but maintain your disgrace.
Serve as a valley to the world.
Serving as a valley to the world,
The ever-constant De will then be sufficient,
Returning you to the state of the uncarved block.

When the uncarved block is broken up, then it becomes tools.
When the sage uses it, then he becomes the senior government official.
Therefore : the greatest cutting does not divide.

Know *your* maleness, but maintain *your* femaleness. [his] [his]
♦Serve as a stream to the world[2].
♦Serving as a stream to the world[2],
The *ever-constant* De will not depart,
♦Returning[2] you to [the state of the] newborn infant[2].
Know *your* brightness, but maintain *your* darkness. [his] [his]
Serve as an example to the world[2].
Serving as an example to the world[2],
The *ever-constant* De will not *falter*, [err]
Returning[2] you to [the state of the] *limitless*[2]. [without highest]
Know *your* honor{glory}, but maintain *your* disgrace[A]. [his] [his]
Serve as a valley to the world[2].
Serving as a valley to the world[2],
The *ever-constant* De will then be sufficient,
Returning[2] you to [the state of the] uncarved block.
♦When the uncarved block is broken up, then it becomes tools.
When the sage[2] uses it[B], then he becomes the *senior* government official. [elder]
Therefore : the greatest *cutting* does not divide.[C] [cut&make garments]

Notes
A : this could possibly be interpreted by reflection with "glory" as "humbleness" or "humility", but it means "disgrace" everywhere else
B : by using "it", this refers to the concept of the uncarved block; but the symbol also means "them", which would refer to the tools
C : *when the uncarved block is cut, it becomes (merely) tools; when the sage cuts, things are not divided up (see #58)*

Cross-references
feminine : #6, #10, #61
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80
De *and* returning : #60, #65
baby/infant/child : #10, #20, #49, #55
newborn infant : #10, #20, #55
serve as an example to the world : #22
valley : #6, #15, #32, #39, #41, #66
uncarved block : #15, #19, #32, #37, #57

Chapter Twenty Nine

將 欲 取 天 下 而 為 之
吾 見 其 不 得 已
[(•)夫] 天 下 神 器 •
不 可 為 也(•)
為 者 敗 之
執 者 失 之
(•)故 物
或 行 或 隨
或 (歔) 或 吹
或 強 或 羸
或 挫 或 隳
是 以 聖 人
去 甚
去 奢
去 泰

Would you take hold of the world and control it?
I see you have no choice.

Now : the world is a divine vessel,
You can not control it (indeed!).
He who acts, ruins it;
He who grasps, loses it.

Therefore : creatures are
Sometimes active, sometimes passive,
Sometimes breathe heavy, sometimes breathe easy,
Sometimes strong, sometimes weak,
Sometimes oppressed, sometimes overthrown.

Thus the sage :
Removes the extremes,
Removes the extravagant and wasteful,
Removes the arrogance.

♦Would[2] you take hold of the world[2] and *control* it?
[manage,handle,administer]
♦I see *you* have no choice[3]. [he]
Now : the world[2] is a *divine* vessel,
[spiritual,supernatural,mystical,miraculous]
You can not *control* it (indeed!).
[manage,handle,administer]
♦He who acts, ruins it;
♦He who grasps, loses it.
Therefore : creatures are
Sometimes active, *sometimes passive*,
[might,maybe] [might,maybe] [submissive]
S*ometimes breathing heavy*[A], *sometimes breathing easy*,[B]
[might,maybe] [snort] [might,maybe] [puff]
Sometimes strong, *sometimes* weak,
[might,maybe] [might,maybe]
Sometimes oppressed, *sometimes* overthrown.[C]
[might,maybe] [might,maybe]
♦Thus[2] the sage[2] :
♦Removes the extremes,
Removes the *extravagant and wasteful*,
Removes the arrogance{exalted}.

Notes
A : every source uses a different symbol here!
B : it is hard to figure out what this sentence is trying to say (literally, “sometimes snort, sometimes blow” in WB); and there is no concensus from the other sources, as they use “exhale … blow”, “flatter … brag”, “breathe silently … breathe loudly”
C : other than WB and HSG, every source has a different pair in this line!

Cross-references
possess or take hold of the world or nation :
#48, #57, #59, #61
have no choice : #30, #31
he who acts, ruins it : #64
he who grasps, loses it : #64
creatures sometimes X…Y : #42
strong : #3, #30, #33, #36, #52, #55, #67, #78
weak : #3, #36, #40, #55, #76, #78

Chapter Thirty

以道佐人主者
不以兵強天下
其事好還
師之所處荊棘生
焉大軍之後必有凶年
善者果而已•
不敢以取強•
果而勿矜•
果而勿伐•
果而勿驕•
果而不得已
果而勿強•
物壯則老
是謂不道
不道早已•

He who uses Dao to assist the master of the people
Does not use weapons or strength on the world,
For his troubles would likely return –
In the dwelling places of armies, thorns and brambles are produced,
And so what is left behind a great army must have a bad year.

He who has virtue gets results and stops.
He does not dare to take by using strength.
He gets results, but never brags.
Gets results, but never boasts.
Gets results, but is not arrogant.
Gets results, but only when he has no choice.
Gets results, but never uses strength.

When creatures are robust but old,
This is called "not Dao".
That which is "not Dao" has an early finish.

He who uses Dao to assist the master of the people[A]
Does not use weapons or strength on the world[2],
♦For his troubles would *likely* return –
[be easy to,be liable to]
In the dwelling places of armies, thorns and brambles are produced,
And so what is [left] behind [→] a great army must have a bad year.[B]
He who has virtue gets results and stops.
He does not dare to take by using strength.
He gets results, but never *brags*. [boast]
Gets results, but never boasts.
Gets results, but is not arrogant{proud}.
Gets results, but [only when he] has no choice[3].
♦Gets results, but never uses strength.
♦When creatures are robust but old,
This is called "not Dao".
[That which] is "not Dao" has an early finish.

Notes
The last 3 lines are not in GUO; several other lines are not in GUO or the MWD's
A : *presumably, an sage-like advisor to a ruler*
B : *presumably referring to harvests*

Cross-references
strong : #3, #29, #33, #36, #52, #55, #67, #78
boast *and* brag : #22, #24
have no choice : #29, #31
when creatures are robust but old : #55
"not Dao" has an early finish : #55

Chapter Thirty One

(•)夫 佳 兵 者 不 祥 之 器 • 物 或 惡 之 • (•)故 有 道 者 不 處 君 子 居 則 貴 左 用 兵 則 貴 右 • 兵 者 不 祥 之 器 • 非 君 子 之 器 • 不 得 已 而 用 之 恬 淡 為 上 __ __ (勿) 美 [也(•)] 而 美 之 者 是 樂 殺 人 • (•)夫 樂 殺 人 者 __ 不 可 以 得 志 於 天 下 矣(•) • [(•)故] 吉 事 尚 左 • 凶 事 尚 右 • [是 以] 偏 將 軍 居 左 上 將 軍 居 右 言 以 喪 禮 處 之 • 殺 人 __ 眾 以 哀 悲 泣 之 戰 勝 以 喪 禮 處 之 •	Now : fine weapons, they are not tools of good fortune. Creatures detest them, no matter what. Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live by them. When a noble man is in his dwelling, then he honors the left. When he commands troops, then he honors the right. Weapons, they are not tools of good fortune. They are not the tools of a noble man. When he has no choice but to use them, To be calm and indifferent is superior – Never pleased, indeed! And he who is pleased enjoys killing people. Now : he who enjoys killing people Can not get what he desires from the world! Therefore : in fortunate affairs honor the left, In unfortunate affairs honor the right. Thus the assistant general of the army resides on the left, The supreme general of the army resides on the right. Thus we say they are dwelling at a funeral : When many people are killed, Then mourn and weep with grief for them. Victory in war thus means they will dwell at a funeral.

Now : fine weapons, they are not tools of *good fortune*.
[auspicious,lucky]
♦Creatures detest them, no matter what.
Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live by them.
♦When a noble man[2]* is in his dwelling, then he honors the left.
♦When he commands troops[2], then he honors the right.
Weapons, they are not tools of *good fortune*.
[auspicious,lucky]
They are not the tools of a noble man[2]*.
♦When he has no choice[3] but to use them,
To be calm and indifferent[A] is superior –
Never pleased, indeed![B]
And he who is pleased [he] *enjoys*[2] killing people.
[is happy,pleased]
Now : he who *enjoys* killing people [happy,pleased]
Can[2] not get what he *desires* from the world[2] !
[ambition,will]
Therefore : in fortunate affairs honor the left,
In unfortunate affairs honor the right.
Thus[2] the assistant general[2] of the army resides on the left,
♦The *supreme* general of the army resides on the right.
[highest,superior]
Thus we say they are dwelling at a funeral[2C] :
When many people are killed,
Then mourn and weep with grief [2] for them. [thus]
Victory in war thus means they will dwell at a funeral[2].

Notes
The first three lines are not in GUO
A : WB and HSG's use of "indifferent" seems the most neutral, but the three earliest sources technically have the majority with "reverent", while FY has "peaceful"
B : this line comes from the MWD's and GUO; the later sources are very different (and do not agree with each other); regardless of the source, this line and the next can be translated many different ways due to the multiple meanings of 美 ("pleased", "beautiful", "good"), and whether or not one assumes that weapons are still being talked about
C : *Ames and Hall point out that ancient Chinese custom puts the place of honor on the left in happy events, and on the right in sorrowful events; thus in war, the supreme general sits on the right, acknowledging that war is a sorrowful event, just like a funeral*

Cross-references
creatures detest them : #24
he who "possesses Dao" : #15, #23, #24, #65, #77
noble man : #26
have no choice : #29, #30

Chapter Thirty Two

道 常 無 名 •
樸 雖 小
天 下 莫 能 臣 __ •
侯 王 若 能 守 之
萬 物 將 自 賓 •
天 地 相 合 •
以 降 甘 露 •
民 莫 之 令
而 自 均
[焉] 始 制 有 名
名 亦 既 有
(•)夫 亦 將 知 止
知 止 (所) 以 不 殆
譬 道 之 在 天 下 •
猶 川 谷 之 (與) 江 海 •

Dao is ever-constantly without-name.

Even though the concept of the uncarved block seems insignificant,
No one in the world can conquer it.
If nobles and kings could maintain it,
The ten thousand creatures would naturally obey.
Heaven and earth would join with each other,
Thus dropping a sweet dew.
There are no citizens who would make this happen,
Yet it would be naturally fair and impartial.

And so, begin to divide and you have names.
Once names exist,
Men should also be ready to know when to stop.
Knowing when to stop is the reason that there is no danger.

An analogy for the action of Dao in the world :
It is similar to a stream in a valley that becomes part of a large river or ocean.

Dao is *ever-constantly* without-name.
Even though the [concept of the] uncarved block seems insignificant,
No one in the world[2] can conquer it.
If nobles[A] and kings could maintain it,
♦The ten thousand creatures would naturally obey.
♦Heaven and earth would join with each other,
Thus dropping a sweet dew.[B]
There are no citizens *who* would make this happen, [they]
Yet [it][C] would be naturally *fair and impartial*.
♦And so, begin to *divide*[D] and you have names. [cut&make garments]
♦*Once* names [also] exist, [now that]
Men should also be ready to know when to stop.
Knowing when to stop is the reason that[2] there is no danger.
An analogy for the action of Dao in the world[2] :
It is similar to a stream in a valley *that* [becomes] *part of* a large river or ocean. [it] [together with,take part in]

Notes
A : while this symbol does literally mean “nobles”, it also specifically refers to a “Marquis”; the Western equivalents for the five grades of Chinese nobility (below the royal family) were Duke, Marquis, Count (or Earl), Viscount, and Baron, in descending order
B : *Waley comments that this phrase is used to indicate that the kingdom is at peace*
C : “they” could be used here, referring to the citizens instead of this process
D : see #28, where the uncarved block is divided

Cross-references
always/ever-constantly without X : #1, #34, #37
without-name : #1, #37, #41
nobles (in general) : #37, #39, #42, #62, #80
if nobles and kings could maintain it : #37
uncarved block : #15, #19, #28, #37, #57
ten thousand creatures would naturally… : #37
knowing when to stop : #44
no danger : #16, #25, #44, #52
valley : #6, #15, #28, #39, #41, #66

Chapter Thirty Three

知 人 者 智 • 自 知 者 明 • 勝 人 者 有 力 • 自 勝 者 強 • 知 足 者 富 • 強 行 者 有 志 • 不 失 其 所 者 久 • 死 而 不 亡 者 壽 •	He who knows people is wise; He who knows himself has insight. He who is victorious over people possesses power; He who is victorious over himself is strong. He who knows he has enough is wealthy; He who uses force possesses ambition. He who does not lose his place endures; He who dies yet does not perish has longevity.
He who knows people is wise*; ♦He who knows himself has *insight*. [wise,sight] ♦He who is victorious over people possesses power; ♦He who is victorious over himself is strong. ♦He who knows he has enough is wealthy; ♦He who uses force[2] possesses ambition. ♦He who does not lose his place[A] *endures*; [for a long time] He who dies yet does not perish has longevity.[B]	Notes A : *possibly meaning one's center, source or root (but then why not use one of the many symbols used elsewhere for these words?), this may be referring to one's station or position in life (ancient Chinese society was highly stratified); but on the other hand, that sounds very Confucian – so you decide!* B : this line has generated much speculation over the millennia; *perhaps it refers to being remembered after you die, or the death of the "self"?* Cross-references strong : #3, #29, #30, #36, #52, #55, #67, #78 knowing one has enough : #44, #46 die/death : #6, #42, #50, #67, #74, #75, #76, #80 anti-Confucian : #3, #18, #19, #27, #38

Chapter Thirty Four

大 道 氾 兮
其 可 左 右 •
萬 物 恃 之 (以) 生
而 不 辭 •
功 成 遂
[而] 不 名 有 •
衣 養 萬 物
而 不 為 主
[(•)故] 常 無 欲 •
可 名 於 小 •
萬 物 歸 焉
而 不 為 主
可 名 (於) 大 •
(是 以 聖 人 之 能 成 大 •)
[以 其 不 為 大 •]
(•)故 能 成 __ 大

Great Dao is like a vast flood!
It is able to flow left and right.

The ten thousand creatures depend on it in order for life,
And are not rejected.
It accomplishes its tasks successfully,
Yet does not possess a name.
It clothes and supports the ten thousand creatures,
But does not act as their master.

Therefore : since it is ever-constantly without-desire,
It can then be named insignificant.

Since the ten thousand creatures return to it
But it does not act as their master,
It can then be named great.

Thus the sage can achieve greatness
Because he does not act great.
Therefore he can achieve greatness.

Great Dao is like a *vast flood* !
♦It is able to flow left and right.[A]
The ten thousand creatures depend on it in order for life,
and are not *rejected*. [decline,dismiss]
It accomplishes its *tasks* successfully, yet does not possess
a name. [results,achievements]
It clothes and supports the ten thousand creatures,
But does not act as their master.
Therefore : since it is *ever-constantly* without-desire,
♦It can then be named insignificant.
♦Since the ten thousand creatures return to it
But it does not act as their master,
It can then be named great.
Thus[2] the sage[2] [he] can achieve greatness
Because he does not act great.
Therefore he can achieve greatness.[B]

Notes
A : *in other words, everywhere*
B : the last three lines are significantly different between sources. What is used here comes from the MWD's, and FY says the exact same thing with slightly different symbols (thus making it the majority). But HSG reads
Thus[2] the sage[2] is whole, but does not act great.
Therefore he can achieve his greatness.
And WB reads (with no reference to the sage, presumably still referring to Dao from earlier in the chapter)
Because it is whole, it naturally does not act great.
Therefore it can achieve its greatness.
WB also switched from saying the sage is great to Dao is great in #67

Cross-references
great Dao : #18, #53
accomplishing tasks : #2, #9, #17, #77
always/ever-constantly without X : #1, #32, #37
without-desire : #1, #3, #37, #57
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #40, #52,
#58, #60, #64, #65, #80
sage can achieve greatness : #63

Chapter Thirty Five

執 大 象 天 下 往 往 而 不 害 安 平 太 • 樂 與 餌 過 客 止 道 之 出 (言) 淡 (呵) 其 無 味 • 視 之 不 足 見 • 聽 之 不 足 聞 • 用 之 不 足 既 •	Holding fast to the great image, The entire world comes towards you. Comes towards you, and meeting with no harm, There is the greatest peace and calm. Music together with good food make passing guests stay, But Dao's words are bland! They are without flavor. Look for it, there is not enough to see. Listen for it, there is not enough to hear. Use it, there is not enough to exhaust.
♦*Holding fast* to the great image, ♦The [entire] world[2] comes towards you. ♦Comes towards you, and [meeting with][A] no harm, There is the greatest *peace and calm*[2]. [peace,calm calm,peace] Music together with *good food* make passing guests stay, [cakes] But Dao 's words[2] are bland ![B] ♦They are without flavor. ♦Look for it, there is not enough to see. ♦Listen for it, there is not enough to hear. Use it, there is not enough to *exhaust*°.	Notes A : "doing" could just as easily be used here, but since the sage is the one who does no harm in #58, #60, and #66, "meeting with" is used B : the sentence-as-a-whole can be interpreted in two different ways (see the Introduction) : "speaking about Dao" or "the words that come out of Dao" (which is used here); also note that in the majority of the sources this line is a statement, not a question Cross-references no harm : #56, #58, #60, #66, #81 look, not seen *and* listen, not heard : #14 use does not exhaust : #4, #5

Chapter Thirty Six

<table>
<tr>
<td>將 欲 歙 之
必 固 張 之
將 欲 弱 之
必 固 強 之
將 欲 廢 之
必 固 興 之 •
將 欲 奪 之
必 固 與 之
是 謂 微 明 •
柔 弱 勝 剛 強
魚 不 可 脫 於 淵
國 之 利 器
不 可 以 示 人 •</td>
<td>When you are about to gather something,
You must have originally spread it out.
When you are about to weaken something,
You must have originally strengthened it.
When you are about to abandon something,
You must have originally been interested in it.
When you are about to seize something,
You must have originally given it.

This is called subtle and obscure insight.

What is soft and weak conquers what is hard and strong.

Fish can not escape from the deep;
The sharp tools of the nation
Can not be shown to the people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you are <u>about to</u>[2] gather [A] something, [<u>inhale</u>] [<u>it</u>]
You <u>must</u> have <u>originally</u> <u>spread</u> <u>it</u> out.
♦When you are <u>about to</u>[2] <u>weaken</u> something, [<u>it</u>]
You <u>must</u> have <u>originally</u> <u>strengthened</u> <u>it</u>.
When you are <u>about to</u>[2] <u>abandon</u> something, [<u>it</u>]
You <u>must</u> have <u>originally</u> been <u>interested</u> in <u>it</u>.
♦When you are <u>about to</u>[2] <u>seize</u> something, [<u>it</u>]
You <u>must</u> have <u>originally</u> <u>given</u> <u>it</u>.
<u>This is</u> <u>called</u> <u>subtle and obscure</u> insight. [<u>wise,sight</u>]
What is <u>soft</u> and <u>weak</u> conquers what is <u>hard</u> and <u>strong</u>. [<u>victorious,beats</u>]
<u>Fish</u> <u>can</u> <u>not</u> <u>escape</u> <u>from</u> the <u>deep</u>;
The <u>sharp</u> <u>tools</u>[B] <u>of</u> the <u>nation</u>
♦<u>Can</u>[2] <u>not</u> be <u>shown</u> to the <u>people</u>.</td>
<td><u>Notes</u>
A : while the majority symbol here means “inhale”, MWD/A uses a symbol meaning to “pick up” or “collect”
B : presumably, weapons; compare to #80, where there is no place to display armor and weapons

<u>Cross-references</u>
weak : #3, #29, #40, #55, #76, #78
strong : #3, #29, #30, #33, #52, #55, #67, #78
soft : #10, #43, #52, #55, #76, #78
hard : #43, #76, #78
soft conquers hard : #43, #78
sharp tools : #57</td>
</tr>
</table>

Chapter Thirty Seven

道 常 無 為 •
而 無 不 為 •
侯 王 若 能 守 之
萬 物 將 自 化
化 而 欲 作
吾 將 鎮 之 以 無 名 之 樸
無 名 之 樸
夫 亦 將 無 欲
不 欲 以 靜
天 下 將 自 定 •

Dao ever-constantly practices non-action,
Yet nothing is left undone.

If nobles and kings could maintain it,
The ten thousand creatures would naturally transform.
Transform, and if desire arises,
I would restrain it by means of the nameless uncarved block.

In the state of the nameless uncarved block,
Men also would be without-desire.
Not desiring, thus they would be still –
And the world would naturally settle.

Dao *ever-constantly* [practices] non-action,
Yet nothing is left *undone*[2]. [not made,become,act]
If nobles[A] and kings could maintain it,
♦The ten thousand creatures would naturally transform.
♦Transform, and if desire arises,
I would *restrain* it by means of the *nameless*[2B] [→] uncarved block. [subdue,supress] [without-name]
In the [state of the] *nameless*[2B] [→] uncarved block, [without-name]
Men also would be without-desire.
Not desiring, thus they would be still –
And the world[2] would naturally settle.

Notes
A : specifically, a Marquis (see #32)
B : this is actually "without-name" (see the Introduction and cross-references below), but cannot be easily worded that way here

Cross-references
always/ever-constantly without X : #1, #32, #34
non-action : #2, #3, #38, #43, #48, #57, #63, #64
yet nothing is left undone : #48
nobles (in general) : #32, #39, #42, #62, #80
    if nobles and kings could maintain it : #32
ten thousand creatures would naturally… : #32
without-name : #1, #32, #41
uncarved block : #15, #19, #28, #32, #57
    uncarved block brings without-desire : #57
without-desire : #1, #3, #34, #57
stillness : #15, #16, #26, #45, #57, #61

Chapter Thirty Eight

上 德 不 德 是 以 有 德 下 德 不 失 德 是 以 無 德 上 德 無 為 而 無 以 為 • 下 德 為 之 而 有 以 為 上 仁 為 之 而 無 以 為 • 上 義 為 之 而 有 以 為 • 上 禮 為 之 而 莫 之 以 應 • 則 攘 臂 而 (仍) 之 (•)故 失 道 而 後 德 失 德 而 後 仁 失 仁 而 後 義 • 失 義 而 後 禮 (•)夫 禮 者 忠 信 之 薄 • 而 亂 之 首 • 前 識 者 道 之 華 • 而 愚 之 始 • 是 以 大 丈 夫 處 其 厚 不 居 其 薄 處 其 實 不 居 其 華 (•)故 去 彼 取 此 •	A man of highest De does not use his De, thus he possesses De. A man of inferior De does not lose his De, thus he is without De. A man of highest De uses non-action, and acts without motive. A man of inferior De coerces others, and has a motive to act. A man of highest kindness coerces others, and acts without motive. A man of highest morality coerces others, and has a motive to act. A man of highest propriety coerces others, and if there is no one who responds, Then he rolls up his sleeves and keeps doing it. Therefore : lose Dao, and later comes De. Lose De, and later comes kindness. Lose kindness, and later comes morality. Lose morality, and later comes propriety. Now : propriety is that which is merely the appearance of loyalty and honesty, And the beginning of confusion. He who is ahead in knowledge has the flower of Dao, But the beginning of stupidity and foolishness. Thus the greatest elders : Live by Dao's substance, and do not dwell on Dao's appearance. Live on Dao's fruit, and do not dwell on Dao's flower. Therefore they leave that and choose this.

♦A man of highest De does not [use his] De, thus[2] he possesses De.
♦A man of inferior De does not lose[A] his De, thus[2] he is without De.
♦A man of highest De uses non-action, and acts without *motive*. [because,in order to]
A man of inferior De *coerces*[B] *others*, and has a *motive* to act. [acts] [them] [because,in order to]
♦A man of highest kindness* *coerces others*, and acts without *motive*. [acts] [them] [because,in order to]
♦A man of highest *morality** *coerces others*, and has a *motive* to act.
[righteousness] [acts] [them] [because,in order to]
♦A man of highest propriety* *coerces others*, and if there is no one *who* [thus] responds, [acts] [them] [they]
Then he rolls up his sleeves[2] and keeps doing it.[C]
Therefore : lose Dao, and later comes De.
Lose De, and later comes kindness*.
Lose kindness*, and later comes *morality**. [righteousness]
Lose *morality**, and later comes propriety*. [righteousness]
Now : propriety* is that which is [merely] the *appearance* of loyalty* and honesty*, [*thin cover*→*facade*]
♦And the beginning of confusion.
♦He who is ahead in knowledge[D] has the flower[E] of Dao,
But the beginning of *stupidity and foolishness*.
♦Thus[2] the greatest *elders*[2] : [elder men]
Live by *Dao's* substance[F], and do not dwell on *Dao's appearance*. [its] [its] [*thin cover*→*facade*]
Live on *Dao's* fruit[E], and do not dwell on *Dao's* flower[E]. [its] [its]
Therefore they leave that and choose this.[G]

Notes
This chapter is anti-Confucian as early as MWD/B!
A : *he does not lose De in that he is always trying to show that he has De*
B : "coerces" is the same symbol as "acts", but is used here to emphasize that it is the opposite of "non-action"
C : this line varies greatly between all the sources, and there is no majority; this comes from FY as it seems to make the most sense
D : this could also mean "future knowledge" and so is often translated as "foreknowledge", "prescience", etc.
E : *fruit provides nourishment, whereas a flower is merely showy*
F : compare to #50 and #75, where living for the "substance" is apparently a bad thing
G : *presumably, appearance and the "flower" vs. substance and the "fruit" (respectively)*

Cross-references
non-action : #2, #3, #37, #43, #48, #57, #63, #64
the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #22, #39, #62, #65, #68
substance : #50, #55, #75
leave that and choose this : #12, #72
anti-Confucian : #3, #18, #19, #27, #33

Chapter Thirty Nine

昔 之 得 一 者 天 得 一 以 清 地 得 一 以 寧 神 得 一 以 靈 谷 得 一 以 盈 萬 物 得 一 以 生 • 侯 王 得 一 以 為 天 下 貞 其 致 之 • 天 無 以 清 將 恐 裂 地 無 以 寧 將 恐 發 神 無 以 靈 將 恐 歇 谷 無 以 盈 將 恐 竭 萬 物 無 以 生 將 恐 滅 侯 王 無 以 貴 高 將 恐 蹶 (•)故 貴 以 賤 為 本 高 以 下 為 基 是 以 侯 王 自 謂 **孤 寡 不 穀** 此 非 以 賤 為 本 (邪(•)) 非 乎(•) (•)故 致 數 輿 無 輿 不 欲 琭 琭 如 玉 珞 珞 如 石	Of those who in ancient times attained oneness : Heaven attained oneness, thus becoming pure and clear. Earth attained oneness, thus becoming stable. Spirit attained oneness, thus becoming potent. The valley attained oneness, thus becoming full. The ten thousand creatures attained oneness, thus becoming alive. Nobles and kings attained oneness, thus serving the world faithfully. They attained it. If heaven could not use its purity and clarity, I fear it would split apart. If earth could not use its stability, I fear it would erupt. If spirit could not use its potency, I fear it would cease to be. If the valley could not use its fullness, I fear it would be used up. If the ten thousand creatures could not use their life, I fear they would be destroyed. If nobles and kings could not use their high rank and prominence, I fear they would fall. Therefore : humility thus serves as the source of high rank; Low thus serves as the foundation of high. Thus nobles and kings call themselves orphaned, lonely, and unlucky. Does this not mean that humility thus serves as the source? Does it not? Therefore : to attain exceptional popularity is to be without popularity – Do not desire to be scarce like jade, But common like rock.

♦Of those who in ancient times [they] *attained* oneness[A] :
[obtained]

♦Heaven *attained* oneness, thus becoming *pure and clear*.
[obtained]

♦Earth *attained* oneness, thus becoming *stable*.
[obtained] [peaceful,tranquil]

♦Spirit *attained* oneness, thus becoming *potent*.
[obtained] [effective]

♦The valley *attained* oneness, thus becoming full.
[obtained]

The ten thousand creatures *attained* oneness, thus becoming alive. [obtained]

Nobles[B] and kings *attained* oneness, thus serving the world[2] faithfully. [obtained]

♦They attained it.

If heaven could not use its *purity and clarity*,
I fear it would *split apart*.
If earth could not use its *stability*, [peaceful,tranquil]
I fear it would *erupt*. [send out,issue,emit]
If spirit could not use its *potency*,
I fear it would *cease to be*. [effectiveness] [stop]
If the valley could not use its fullness,
I fear it would be used up.
If the ten thousand creatures could not use their life,
I fear they would be destroyed.
If nobles and kings could not use their high rank and *prominence*, [high level,above]
I fear they would fall.
Therefore : humility thus serves as the source of high rank;
Low thus serves as the foundation of high.[C]

♦Thus[2] nobles and kings call themselves orphaned{lonely}, lonely{widowed}, and *unlucky*[2D]. [not lucky]
Does this not mean that humility thus serves as the source ?
Does it not ?
Therefore : to attain exceptional popularity is to be without popularity –
Do not desire to be scarce[2] like jade,
But *common*[2°] like rock.[E]

Notes

A : *presumably, oneness with Dao*
B : specifically, a Marquis (see #32)
C : compare to #2, where high and low lean on each other
D : these two symbols together can also be translated as "worthless" or "unhappy"

Cross-references

the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #22, #38, #62, #65, #68
valley : #6, #15, #28, #32, #41, #66
nobles (in general) : #32, #37, #42, #62, #80
serve the world : #13, #49
orphaned, lonely, and unlucky : #42

Chapter Forty

反 者 道 之 動 • 弱 者 道 之 用 • 天 下 萬 物 生 於 有 有 生 於 無 •	The movement of Dao returns things. The function of Dao is to weaken things. The ten thousand creatures of the world are created from being; Being is created from non-being.
♦The movement of Dao returns *things*. [entities] ♦The *function* of Dao is to weaken *things*.[A] [usefulness] [entities] The ten thousand[B] creatures of the world[2] are created from being;[C] Being is created from non-being.[D]	Notes A : *all creatures grow weaker as they age, and all man-made things decay and fall apart, which is the way (Dao) of the universe; this is why in #30 and #55 creatures which are old but still robust are "not Dao"*; compare these first two lines to #14 and #21, where Dao's action is indistinct and confusing B : technically, the majority of the sources read "The creatures of the world…" but "ten thousand creatures" is such a standard saying everywhere else that it is retained here from the other sources C : compare to #42, where creatures are created by "three" D : compare to #2, where non-being and being create each other Cross-references returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80 weak : #3, #29, #36, #55, #76, #78 non-being : #2, #43

Chapter Forty One

上 士 聞 道 勤 而 行 之
中 士 聞 道 若 存 若 亡
下 士 聞 道 大 笑 之
不 笑 不 足 以 為 道 •
(•)故 建 言 有 之 (曰) •
明 道 若 昧
進 道 若 退
夷 道 若 纇
上 德 若 谷 •
大 白 若 辱
廣 德 若 不 足
建 德 若 偷
質 真 若 渝
大 方 無 隅
大 器 晚 成
大 音 希 聲
大 象 無 形
道 隱 無 名 •
(•)夫 唯 道 善 (始) 且 (善) 成

The superior scholar hearing of Dao works hard and practices it.
The average scholar hearing of Dao seems to keep it, seems to lose it.
The inferior scholar hearing of Dao laughs greatly at it.
If he did not laugh, it would not be qualified to be Dao.

Therefore : in the established sayings that exist, it is said –
Insight into Dao seems like darkness.
Advancing in Dao seems like retreating.
Smooth Dao seems knotted.
Superior De seems like a valley.
The greatest purity seems like disgrace.
The most extensive De seems like it is not enough.
Established De seems aimless.
Real and true character seems inconsistent.

The greatest region is without borders.
The greatest vessel is last to be completed.
The greatest tone is a tenuous sound.
The greatest image is without-form.
Dao is hidden and without-name.

Now : only Dao is good at beginning and also good at completing.

The superior scholar hearing of Dao *works hard* and *practices* it. [performs]
The *average* scholar hearing of Dao seems to keep it, seems to lose it. [middle]
♦The inferior scholar hearing of Dao laughs greatly at it.
♦If he did not laugh, it would not be qualified[3] to be Dao.
Therefore : in the established sayings[2A] that exist, it is said –
Insight into Dao seems like darkness. [wise,sight]
♦Advancing in Dao seems like retreating.
♦Smooth Dao seems knotted.[B]
♦Superior De seems like a valley.
♦The greatest purity seems like disgrace.
♦The most extensive De seems like it is not enough.
♦Established De seems aimless.
Real and true character seems *inconsistent*. [change]
♦The greatest region is without borders.[C]
The greatest vessel is *last* to be completed.[D] [late]
The greatest tone is a *tenuous* sound. [rare]
The greatest image is without-form.
Dao is hidden and without-name.
Now : only Dao is good at beginning and also good at completing.[E]

Notes
A : Ames&Hall comment that it is unknown whether "established sayings" is referring to proverbs in general, or a specific work that no longer exists
B : compare to #53, where "Dao is extremely even"
C : this line could just as likely be translated as
The greatest square is without corners
but considering that the DDJ often refers to nations, this translation seems more appropriate
D : a euphemism for "great talents mature slowly"
E : although this line only survives in MWD/B of the three earlier sources, it is used here because it is much more straightforward and understandable than the later three

Cross-references
scholar : #15, #68
valley : #6, #15, #28, #32, #39, #66
tone *and* voice/sound (same symbol) : #2
tenuous : #14
hidden : #15
without-name : #1, #32, #37

Chapter Forty Two

道 生 一
一 生 二
二 生 三
三 生 萬 物
萬 物 負 陰 而 抱 陽
沖 氣 以 為 和
人 之 所 惡
唯 孤 寡 不 穀
而 王 公 以 (自) 稱 •
(•)故 物
或 損 之 而 益
或 益 之 而 損
人 之 所 教 我 亦 教 之
強 梁 者 不 得 其 死
吾 將 以 為 教 父

Dao creates one.
One creates two.
Two creates three.
Three creates the ten thousand creatures.
The ten thousand creatures carry Yin and embrace Yang,
Pouring their Qi together, thus becoming harmonious.

That which people detest :
Being alone, orphaned, lonely, and unlucky –
Yet kings and nobles thus name themselves.

Therefore : creatures
Sometimes lose, yet they gain;
Sometimes gain, yet they lose.

That which people teach, I also teach :
Those who are bullies and hoodlums do not meet their natural death.
I will thus become their elder teacher.

♦Dao creates one.
♦One creates two.
♦Two creates three.
♦Three creates the ten thousand creatures.[A]
♦The ten thousand creatures carry Yin and embrace Yang,
♦Pouring their Qi together, thus becoming harmonious.
♦That which people [they] detest :
♦Being alone, orphaned{lonely}, lonely{widowed}, and *unlucky*[2B] – [not lucky]
Yet kings and *nobles*[C] thus name themselves. [dukes]
Therefore : creatures
Sometimes lose, yet they *gain*;
[maybe,perhaps] [benefit,increase]
Sometimes gain, yet they lose.
[maybe,perhaps] [benefit,increase]
That which people [they] teach, I also teach [it] :
Those who are *bullies and hoodlums* do not *meet* their [natural] death. [bully,ruffian[2]] [obtain,get]
I will thus become their elder teacher.[D]

Notes
A : compare to #40, where creatures are created from being
B : these two symbols together can also be translated as “worthless” or “unhappy”
C : specifically Dukes (see #32), but in keeping with other chapters, this is interpreted more generally as “nobles”
D : 教 父 is often translated as some variant of “senior teaching” (primary teaching, essence of teaching, principal teaching, etc.), but it also means “godfather” in the best sense of the term (friend and teacher), and this translation is consistent with #27, where a virtuous person is the teacher of a non-virtuous person

Cross-references
Qi : #10, #55
orphaned, lonely, and unlucky : #39
nobles (in general) : #32, #37, #39, #62, #80
creatures sometimes X…Y : #29
teaching : #2, #27, #43
die/death : #6, #33, #50, #67, #74, #75, #76, #80

Chapter Forty Three

天 下 之 至 柔
馳 騁 天 下 之 至 堅
無 有 入 無 間
吾 是 以 知 無 為 之 有 益 •
不 言 之 教
無 為 之 益
天 下 希 及 之 •

The softest things of the world
Overrun the hardest things of the world.

Non-being can enter where there is no space in between.
Thus I know that non-action has benefits.

The teaching of no-talking,
The benefit of non-action –
Few in the world attain these.

♦The *softest*[2] things of the world[2] [most soft]
Overrun the *hardest*[2] things of the world[2].
[gallop[2]] [most hard]
Non-being can enter where there is no *space in between*.
♦Thus[2] I know that non-action [it] has benefits.
♦The teaching of no-talking,
♦The benefit of non-action –
Few in the world[2] attain *these*. [rare,infrequent] [them]

Notes

Cross-references
soft : #10, #36, #52, #55, #76, #78
hard : #36, #76, #78
soft conquers hard : #36, #78
non-being : #2, #40
non-action : #2, #3, #37, #38, #48, #57, #63, #64
teaching : #2, #27, #42
  teaching of no-talking : #2

Chapter Forty Four

名 與 身 孰 親
身 與 貨 孰 多
得 與 亡 孰 病
甚 愛 必 大 費
多 藏 必 厚 亡
知 足 不 辱
知 止 不 殆
可 以長 久

Fame and self : which do you love?
Self and property : which is greater?
Gain and loss : which is the affliction?

Extreme desire must lead to great expense.
Collecting too much must lead to substantial loss.

Knowing when you have enough, there can be no disgrace.
Knowing when to stop, there can be no danger.
Then you can forever endure.

♦Fame and self : which do you love?
♦Self and property : which is *greater*? [many,much,more]
♦Gain and loss : which is the *affliction*? [sickness,illness]
♦Extreme *desire* must lead to great expense. [like,affection]
♦Collecting too much must lead to substantial loss.
♦Knowing when you have enough, there can be no disgrace.
♦Knowing when to stop, there can be no danger.
♦Then you can[2] forever *endure*. [for a long time]

Notes
With the exception of a couple of "therefore"'s in some sources but not others, this is the only chapter for which virtually every symbol is identical across all sources!

Cross-references
self : #7, #9, #13, #16, #26, #52, #54, #66
knowing you have enough : #33, #46
knowing when to stop : #32
no danger : #16, #25, #32, #52
can forever endure : #59

Chapter Forty Five

大 成 若 缺
其 用 不 弊 •
大 盈 若 (盅)
其 用 不 窮 •
大 直 若 屈 •
大 巧 若 拙 •
大 辯 若 訥 •
躁 勝 寒 •
靜 勝 熱
清 靜 為 天 下 正 •

Great achievement seems incomplete,
But its usefulness is not impaired.

Great fullness is like a cup or bowl,
Its usefulness is not exhausted.

Great straightness seems bent.
Great skillfulness seems clumsy.
Great debaters seem slow of speech.

Restlessness conquers cold.
Stillness conquers heat.

Purity and clarity along with stillness makes the world proper and correct.

Great achievement seems *incomplete*, [lacking]
But its usefulness is not *impaired*. [harmed]
Great fullness is like a *cup or bowl*[A],
Its usefulness is not exhausted.
Great straightness seems bent.
Great skillfulness seems clumsy.[B]
Great debaters seem slow of speech[C].
♦Restlessness *conquers* cold. [victorious,beats]
♦Stillness *conquers* heat. [victorious,beats]
Purity and clarity[D] along with stillness[D] makes the world[2] *proper and correct*{*honest and just*}.

Notes

A : the symbol used here only appears in 1/5 sources, but gives the most understandable translation (and matches the first line in #4)

B : this line could just as likely be translated as
Great cleverness seems stupid.

C : this is a euphemism for stammering, but also represents a personal quality that Confucius recommended people cultivate

D : *presumably referring to inner, mental/emotional qualities*

Cross-references

stillness : #15, #16, #26, #37, #57, #61
stillness *and* restlessness : #26

Chapter Forty Six

<table>
<tr>
<td>
天 下 有 道
卻 走 馬 以 糞
天 下 無 道
戎 馬 生 於 郊 •
(罪 莫 大 於 可 欲)
禍 莫 大 於 不 知 足
咎 莫 大 於 欲 得
(•)故 知 足 之 足 常 足 矣(•) •
</td>
<td>
When the world possesses Dao,
Riding horses are nonetheless used for manure.
When the world is without Dao,
War-horses are bred in the countryside.

There is no fault greater than the capacity for desire.
There is no misfortune greater than not knowing when you have enough.
There is no error greater than desire for gain.

Therefore : knowing the sufficiency of having enough, there is always enough!
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>
♦When the world[2] possesses Dao,
♦Riding horses are *nonetheless* used for manure.
[still,yet,however]
♦When the world[2] is without Dao,
♦*War*-horses are *bred* in the *countryside*.
[military] [produced] [open spaces/outskirts]
♦There is no fault greater than the *capacity* for desire.[A]
[ability]
♦There is no misfortune greater than not knowing when you have enough.
♦There is no error greater than desire for gain.
Therefore : knowing the sufficiency of having enough, there is always enough ![B]
</td>
<td>
Notes
A : this line is in every source except WB
B : The core of this sentence is “足 of 足 always 足”, where 足 can mean “enough”, “sufficient”, or possibly “satisfaction” (and by interpretation, “contentment”), so it can be translated in many ways; while I usually use the same English word for each symbol (when appropriate), in this case it seems clearer to use different words with equivalent meanings within the same sentence; this would be similar to changing the phrase “appears to have appeared” to “seems to have appeared”

Cross-references
knowing you have enough : #33, #44
</td>
</tr>
</table>

Chapter Forty Seven

不 出 戶
[以] 知 天 下
不 闚 牖
[以] (知) 天 道
其 出 彌 遠
其 知 彌 少
是 以 聖 人
不 行 而 知
不 見 而 名
不 為 而 成

You do not have to go out the door
In order to to know the world.
You do not have to look out the window
In order to to know the Way of heaven.

The farther you go out,
You know even less.

Thus the sage :
Does not travel, yet knows.
Does not display himself, yet has a reputation.
Does not act, yet accomplishes.

You do not have to go out the door
In order to to know the world[2].
You do not have to *look out* the window [peep,spy]
In order to to know the Way of heaven.
♦The *farther*[2] *you* go out, [even more distance] [he]
You know even[more] less. [he]
Thus[2] the sage[2] :
Does not travel, yet knows.
Does not *display* himself, yet has a reputation. [show]
♦Does not act, yet accomplishes.

Notes

Cross-references
Way of heaven : #9, #73, #77, #79, #81
not displaying oneself (showing off) : #22, #24, #72, #77

Chapter Forty Eight

為 學 (者) 日 益 為 道 (者) 日 損 損 之 又 損 以 至 於 無 為 • 無 為 而 無 不 為 • 取 天 下 常 以 無 事 及 其 有 事 • 不 足 以 取 天 下	The actions of those who learn daily increase. The actions of those who Dao daily decrease. Decreasing and again decreasing, In order to arrive at non-action. Use non-action, and nothing is left undone. To take hold of the world, always use non-interference. When you are compelled to interfere, Then you are not qualified to take hold of the world.
♦The actions of those who learn daily increase. ♦The actions of those who Dao daily decrease. Decreasing [them] *and again* decreasing, ♦In order to arrive at non-action. ♦Use non-action, and nothing is left *undone*[2]. [not made,become,act] To take hold of the world[2], always use non-interference[2]. ♦When *you* are *compelled* to *interfere*°,[A] [he] [have,possess] ♦Then you are not qualified to[3] take hold of the world[2].	Notes A : literally, when you "possess *interference*"; although 事 does not ordinarily mean interfere, this is assumed by reflection from the previous line Cross-references non-action : #2, #3, #37, #38, #43, #57, #63, #64 nothing is left undone : #37 non-interference : #57, #63 possess or take hold of the world or nation : #29, #57, #59, #61 by using non-interference : #57

Chapter Forty Nine

聖 人 無 常 心
以 百 姓 心 為 心
善 者 吾 善 之
不 善 者 吾 亦 善 之
德 善 •
信 者 吾 信 之
不 信 者 吾 亦 信 之
德 信 •
聖 人 在 天 下 歙 歙
[焉] 為 天 下 渾 其 心
百 姓 皆 注 其 耳 目
聖 人 皆 孩 之

The sage does not have a constant heart/mind,
Thus the 100 families' heart/minds become his heart/mind.

He who is virtuous, I am virtuous to him.
He who is not virtuous, I am also virtuous to him.
Because De is virtue.

He who is honest, I am honest with him.
He who is not honest, I am also honest with him.
Because De is honesty.

The sage lives in the world, gathering it all in.
And so he serves the world, merging with their heart/minds.

The 100 families all pay attention to their ears and eyes,
And the sage treats them all like his children.

The sage[2] does not have a constant *heart/mind*,
♦Thus the 100 families' *heart/minds* become his *heart/mind*.
♦He who is virtuous, I am virtuous to him.
♦He who is not virtuous, I am also virtuous to him.
♦Because De is virtue.
♦He who is honest*, I am honest* with him.
♦He who is not honest*, I am also honest* with him.
♦Because De is honesty*.
♦The sage[2] *lives in* the world[2], *gathering it all in*[2A].
[inhale inhale]
♦And so he serves the world[2], merging with their heart/minds.[B]
♦The 100 families all pay attention to their ears and eyes[C],
♦And the sage[2] treats them all like [his][D] children.

Notes

A : compare to #50, which refers to one who "takes in life"; "gathering" is used for consistency with #36; the repeated symbol implies "very", hence completeness

B : this line can be translated in many ways, mainly due to the fact that the symbol for "merges" can also mean "muddled" or "whole"; also 其 (his/their) could be referring to the sage or to the 100 families; the choices made here are consistent with the first two lines of the chapter

C : compare to #12, where the sage does not act on what he sees

D : adding "his" turns this line from something deragatory ("treats them all like children", which seems out of character) into something that matches #42, where the sage becomes an "elder teacher" (literally, godfather)

Cross-references

100 families : #5, #17
one who is not virtuous : #27, #62, #81
serve the world : #13, #39
baby/infant/child : #10, #20, #28, #55

Chapter Fifty

出 生 入 死
生 之 徒 十 有 三
死 之 徒 十 有 三
人 之 生 動 之 死 地
亦 十 有 三
(•)夫 何 故 •
以 其 生 生 之 厚 •
蓋 聞 善 攝 生 者
(陵) 行 不 遇 兕 虎
入 軍 不 被 甲 兵
兕 無 所 投 其 角
虎 無 所 措 其 爪
兵 無 所 容 其 刃
(•)夫 何 故 •
以 其 無 死 地

Between coming out into life and entering death,
Followers of life are 3 in 10.
Followers of death are 3 in 10.
People whose lives are merely moving them towards the
place of death
Are also 3 in 10.

Now : what is the reason?
Because they live life for its substance.

But I have heard that he who is skilled at taking in life
Can travel the mountains and does not meet rhino or tiger,
Can enter a battle not wearing armor or weapons.
The rhino has no place to thrust its horns,
The tiger has no place to use its claws,
The weapon has no place to allow its blade.

Now : what is the reason?
Because for him there is no place of death.

♦Between coming out into life and entering death,
♦Followers[A] of life are *3 in 10*[B]. [10 has 3]
♦Followers of death are *3 in 10*. [10 has 3]
People *whose* lives are [merely] moving them towards the
place of death[C] [their]
Are also *3 in 10*. [10 has 3]
Now : what is the reason?
Because they live life for its substance[D].
♦But I have heard that he who is skilled at taking in[E] life
Can travel the mountains and does not meet rhino or tiger,
♦Can enter a *battle* not wearing armor or weapons.
[army,military]
♦The rhino has no place to *thrust* its horns, [send,put in]
The tiger has no place to *use* its claws, [employ]
♦The weapon has no place to allow its blade.
Now : what is the reason?
Because for him there is no place of death.

Notes
A : "follower" as in disciple or one who agrees with a particular way of looking at things
B : this phrase can also be interpreted as "13", possibly referring to the 4 limbs and 9 openings of the human body, but when using "3 in 10" then the first five lines discuss 9 out of 10 people, and the remaining lines seem to talk about the tenth (*presumably sage-like*) person
C : there are many different interpretations of this phrase (and the entire sentence); *presumably, the "place of death" is the end destination of the journey of life as opposed to a literal location (a more modern interpretation of the symbols is the "point of death")*; while the symbols for this sentence come from WB and HSG and are technically a minority, the phrasing they use here matches that in the third line following
D : compare to #38, where living for the "substance" is apparently a good thing, and #75, where it is a bad thing
E : compare to #49, where the sage "gathers in the world"; the last part of this sentence could also be translated as "he who has virtue and takes in life"

Cross-references
die/death : #6, #33, #42, #67, #74, #75, #76, #80
follower of life *and* follower of death : #76
substance : #38, #55, #75

Chapter Fifty One

道 生 之
德 畜 之
物 形 之
勢 成 之
是 以 萬 物
莫 不 尊 道 而 貴 德
道 之 尊 •
德 之 貴 •
(•)夫 莫 之 命 •
而 常 自 然 •
(•)故 道 生 之 德 畜 之
長 之 育 之
亭 之 毒 之
養 之 覆 之
生 而 不 有 •
為 而 不 恃 •
長 而 不 宰
是 謂 玄 德

Dao creates them,
De raises them,
Things shape them,
Circumstances complete them.

Thus among the ten thousand creatures,
There are none who do not respect Dao and honor De.
Respect of Dao,
Honor of De –
Now : there is no one who commands this,
Yet it is always naturally so.

Therefore : Dao creates them, De raises them.
Leads them, nourishes them,
Shelters them, heals them,
Supports them, protects them.

Creating but not possessing,
Acting but not concerned with the results,
Leading yet not governing –
This is called deep and mysterious De.

♦Dao creates them,
♦De raises them,
Things shape them,
Circumstances complete them. [conditions,situations]
♦Thus[2] [among] the ten thousand creatures,
There are none who do not respect Dao and honor De.
♦Respect of Dao,
♦Honor of De –
Now : there is no one *who* commands this, [they]
Yet it is always naturally so[2].
Therefore : Dao creates them, De raises them.
♦Leads them, nourishes them,
♦*Shelters* them, *heals*[A] them,
[booth,pavillion,rest house] [poison(ous)]
♦Supports them, *protects* them. [cover,screen]
♦Creating but not possessing,
♦Acting but not *concerned with* [the results],
[depend upon,rely upon]
Leading yet not governing –
♦This is called *deep and mysterious* De.

Notes
A : Hatcher claims that 覆 (poison) can also mean its opposite, hence “healing”

Cross-references
naturally so : #17, #23, #25, #64
creating but not possessing : #2, #10
acting but not concerned : #2, #10, #77
leading yet not governing : #10
mystery : #1, #6, #10, #15, #27, #56, #62, #65
deep and mysterious De : #10, #65

Chapter Fifty Two

天 下 有 始
以 為 天 下 母
既 得 其 母
以 知 其 子
既 知 其 子
復 守 其 母
沒 身 不 殆 •
塞 其 兌 閉 其 門
終 身 不 勤
開 其 兌 濟 其 事
終 身 不 救 •
見 小 曰 明
守 柔 曰 強
用 其 光 復 歸 其 明
無 遺 身 殃
是 謂 習 常

The world had a beginning,
Which can be considered the mother of the world.
Once you have realized its mother,
You thus know her children.
Once you know her children,
Return to and maintain their mother.

When the self disappears, there can be no danger.

Block your senses, close your gateway –
All your life you will not struggle.
Open your senses, be successful in your duties –
All your life you will not have relief.

Seeing the insignificant speaks of insight.
Maintaining softness speaks of strength.
Use your brightness to return to your insight.
Do not lose your self in misfortune.
This is called practicing the ever-constant.

♦The world[2] had a beginning,
♦Which can be considered[2] the mother of the world[2].
♦*Once* you have *realized* its mother,
[now that] [gained,gotten]
♦You thus know her children.
♦*Once* you know her children, [now that]
♦Return to and maintain their mother.
♦When the self disappears, there can be no danger.
Block *your senses*°, close *your* gateway – [his] [his]
♦*All your life* you will not *struggle*.
[lifelong[2]] [diligent,hard work]
Open *your senses*°, be successful in *your* duties – [his] [his]
All your life you will not have relief. [lifelong[2]]
♦Seeing the insignificant speaks of *insight*. [wise,sight]
♦Maintaining softness speaks of strength.
♦Use *your* brightness to return[2] to *your insight*.
[his] [his] [wise,sight]
Do not lose your self in misfortune.
This is called practicing the *ever-constant*.[A]

Notes
A : while this could also be translated as
This is called the ever-constant practice
the symbol for "practice" is instead "follow" in FY and MWD/A; since "the ever-constant following" doesn't make since, the line is translated this way

Cross-references
mother : #1, #20, #25, #59
mother of the world : #25
self : #7, #9, #13, #16, #26, #44, #54, #66
no danger : #16, #25, #32, #44
when the self disappears, there can be no danger : #16
gateway : #1, #6, #10, #56
block your senses, close your gateway : #56
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80
soft : #10, #36, #43, #55, #76, #78
strong : #3, #29, #30, #33, #36, #55, #67, #78

Chapter Fifty Three

• 使 我 介 然 有 知 •
行 於 大 道
唯 迤 是 畏
大 道 甚 夷 •
而 民 好 徑 •
朝 甚 除 •
田 甚 蕪 •
倉 甚 虛
服 文 綵
帶 利 劍
厭 飲 食 •
財 貨 有 餘
是 謂 盜 夸
非 道 也 哉 (•)

If I correctly use the tiniest bit of knowledge that I possess
While travelling on the great Way,
It is only walking off the path that I need to fear.
The great Way is extremely even,
But the citizens are fond of side paths.

Although the royal court is very well-kept,
The fields are very overgrown with weeds,
The granaries are very empty.
While at the court they wear refined multicolored silks,
Carry sharp swords,
Stuff themselves with drink and food,
And have an excess of wealth and goods.

This is called robbery and extravagance,
Not Dao, indeed!!

If I correctly use the tiniest bit of knowledge that I possess
♦While travelling on the great Way,
It is only walking off the path that I need to fear.
♦The great Way is extremely even,[A]
But the citizens are fond of [side] paths.
♦[Although] the royal court is very *well-kept*,
[remove,wipe out→*clean*]
♦The fields are very overgrown with weeds,
♦The granaries are very empty.
[While at the court] they wear refined{formal}
multicolored silks,
♦Carry sharp swords,
Stuff themselves with drink and food, [satiate,satisfy]
♦And have an excess of wealth and goods.
This is called robbery[B] and extravagance,
♦Not Dao, indeed! !

Notes
A : compare to #41, where “smooth Dao seems knotted”
B: a play on words, since 盜 (robbery) is also pronounced “dao”

Cross-references
great Dao : #18, #34

Chapter Fifty Four

善 建 者 不 拔
善 抱 者 不 脫
子 孫 以 祭 祀 不 輟
修 之 __ 身 其 德 乃 (眞)
修 之 __ 家 其 德 乃 餘
修 之 __ 鄉 其 德 乃 長
修 之 __ 國 其 德 乃 豐
修 之 __ 天 下 其 德 乃 普
(•)故 以 身 觀 身
以 家 觀 家
以 鄉 觀 鄉
以 國 觀 國
以 天 下 觀 天 下
吾 何 以 知 天 下 然 哉(•)
以 此

That which is well established is not uprooted.
That which is well embraced is not abandoned.
Thus children and grandchildren offer sacrifices, and so sacrifices do not stop.

Cultivate it in the self – your De will then be true and real.
Cultivate it in the family – its De will then be more than enough.
Cultivate it in the village – its De will then last forever.
Cultivate it in the nation – its De will then be abundant.
Cultivate it in the world – its De will then be everywhere.

Therefore : use your self to contemplate the self.
Use your family to contemplate the family.
Use your village to contemplate the village.
Use your nation to contemplate the nation.
Use the world to contemplate the world.

How do I thus know the world is like this?
By means of this.

♦That which is *well* established is not uprooted. [skillfully]
♦That which is *well* embraced is not abandoned. [skillfully]
Thus children and grandchildren offer sacrifices, [and so] sacrifices do not stop.[A]
♦Cultivate it[B] in the self – *your* De will then be *true and real*. [his]
Cultivate it in the family – its De will then be *more than enough*. [surplus,excess]
♦Cultivate it in the village – its De will then last forever.
Cultivate it in the nation – its De will then be abundant.
Cultivate it in the world[2] – its De will then be everywhere.
Therefore : use [your] self to *contemplate*[C] the self. [observe]
♦Use [your] family to *contemplate* the family. [observe]
Use [your] village to *contemplate* the village. [observe]
♦Use [your] nation to *contemplate* the nation. [observe]
♦Use the world[2] to *contemplate* the world[2]. [observe]
♦How do I thus know the world[2] is like this ?
♦By means of this[D].

Notes
A : *this line seems to merely be a "for example"; the main point of the first two lines then continues with the "cultivate" lines*
B : *presumably, De*; but the original Chinese just says "it", so you decide!
C : while the common meaning of this symbol is "observe" (as used elsewhere), here it is taken to mean to contemplate or meditate upon, with the connotation of examining a concept in order to see things as they really are
D : *"this" could be referring to contemplating the previous things, or just observing the world in front of you, or to the teachings of the DDJ, or to something else – you decide!*

Cross-references
self : #7, #9, #13, #16, #26, #44, #52, #66
how do I thus know… : #21, #57
by means of this : #21, #57

Chapter Fifty Five

含 德 之 厚 [者]
比 於 赤 子 •
蜂 蠆 虺 蛇 不 螫
猛 獸 不 據
攫 鳥 不 摶
骨 弱 筋 柔 而 握 固 •
未 知 牝 牡 之 合 而 (朘) 作
精 之 至 也(•) •
終 日 號 而 不 嗄
和 之 至 也(•)
知 和 曰 常
知 常 曰 明
益 生 曰 祥 •
心 使 氣 曰 強
物 壯 則 老
謂 之 不 道 •
不 道 早 已

He who embodies the substance of De
Can be compared to a newborn child :
Wasps, scorpions, snakes, and serpents do not sting him,
Fierce beasts do not seize him,
Birds of prey do not claw him.
His bones are weak, his muscles are soft, yet his grasp is firm and strong.
He has not yet known the union of female and male, yet his penis rises.
He has the utmost essence, indeed!
He cries the entire day yet does not get hoarse.
He has the utmost harmony, indeed!

Knowing harmony speaks of the ever-constant.
Knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight.
Benefitting life speaks of good fortune.
Heart/mind making Qi speaks of strength.

When creatures are robust but old,
We call them "not Dao".
That which is "not Dao" has an early finish.

♦He who embodies the substance of De
♦Can be compared to a newborn child[2] :
Wasps, scorpions, snakes, and serpents do not sting him,
Fierce beasts do not seize him,
Birds of prey[2] do not *claw* him.
[seize,catch,take hold bird] [roll around with hand]
♦His bones are weak, his muscles are soft, yet his grasp is *firm and strong*.
He has not yet known the union of female and male, yet his *penis* rises. [baby's genitals]
♦He has the *utmost* [of] essence, indeed! [extreme,most]
♦He cries the entire day yet does not get hoarse.
♦He has the *utmost* [of] harmony, indeed! [extreme,most]
♦Knowing harmony speaks of the *ever-constant*.
♦Knowing the *ever-constant* speaks of *insight*. [wise,sight]
♦Benefitting life speaks of *good fortune*.[A]
[auspicious,lucky]
♦*Heart/mind* making Qi speaks of strength.
♦When creatures are robust but old,
♦We call them "not Dao".
[That which is] "not Dao" has an early finish.

Notes
The last sentence is in all sources except GUO
A : this sentence and the next are sometimes reversed in meaning, as their last symbols have both positive and negative interpretations

Cross-references
substance : #38, #50, #75
baby/infant/child : #10, #20, #28, #49
newborn infant : #10, #20, #28
weak : #3, #29, #36, #40, #76, #78
soft : #10, #36, #43, #52, #76, #78
strong : #3, #29, #30, #33, #36, #52, #67, #78
essence : #21
knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight : #16
Qi : #10, #42
when creatures are robust but old : #30
"not Dao" has an early finish : #30

Chapter Fifty Six

知 者 不 言 •
言 者 不 知 •
塞 其 兌 閉 其 門
挫 其 銳
解 其 紛
和 其 光
同 其 塵
是 謂 玄 同 •
(•)故 不 可 得 而 親 •
不 可 得 而 疏 •
不 可 得 而 利
不 可 得 而 害
不 可 得 而 貴
不 可 得 而 賤
(•)故 為 天 下 貴 •

He who knows does not speak;
He who speaks does not know.

Block your senses, close your gateway.
Blunt your sharpness,
Loosen your tangles,
Soften your brightness,
Be the same as the dust of the world.
This is called a deep and mysterious sameness.

Therefore : you can not gain it and be friendly,
Can not gain it and be unfriendly,
Can not gain it and benefit,
Can not gain it and cause harm,
Can not gain it and have high rank,
Can not gain it and be lowly.

Therefore you become valuable to the world.

♦He who knows does not speak;
♦He who speaks does not know.
♦Block *your senses*°, close *your* gateway. [his] [his]
Blunt your sharpness, [dampens,subdues] [his]
♦Loosen *your* tangles[A], [his]
Soften *your* brightness,[B] [his]
♦Be [*you*] the same as the *dust of the world*[C]. [his]
♦This is called a *deep and mysterious* sameness.
♦Therefore : you can not gain it[D] and be *friendly*, [love,in favor of]
♦Can not gain it and be unfriendly,
♦Can not gain it and benefit,
♦Can not gain it and cause harm,
♦Can not gain it and have high rank,
♦Can not gain it and be *lowly*. [worthless]
♦Therefore you[E] become valuable to the world[2].

Notes
A : this line could also be translated as
Clarify *your* confusion
B : compare to #58, where the sage is bright but does not dazzle
C : *according to Waley, "dust" is a metaphor for the "noise and fuss of everyday life"*
D : there is no noun in the original Chinese, so you decide what "it" is!
E : "it" (whatever "it" is in the previous lines) could just as reasonably be used here

Cross-references
gateway : #1, #6, #10, #52
block your senses, close your gateway : #52
blunt the sharpness : #4
loosen the tangles : #4
soften the brightness : #4
dust of the world : #4
mystery : #1, #6, #10, #15, #27, #51, #62, #65
mysterious sameness : #1
no harm : #35, #58, #60, #66, #81
being valuable : #62, #70
therefore become valuable to the world : #62

Chapter Fifty Seven

• 以 正 治 國
以 奇 用 兵
以 無 事 取 天 下
吾 何 以 知 其 然 哉(•)
以 此
天 下 多 忌 諱
而 民 彌 貧 •
民 多 利 器
[而] 國 家 滋 昏
人 多 (知) 巧
[而] 奇 物 滋 起
法 (物) 滋 (章)
盜 賊 多 有
(•)故 聖 人 云
我 無 為 而 民 自 化
我 好 靜 而 民 自 正
我 無 事 而 民 自 富
我 無 欲 而 民 自 樸 •

Use honesty and justness when governing a nation.
Use strange and unusual tactics when commanding troops.
Use non-interference to take hold of the world.
How do I thus know it is like this?
By means of this :

The world has many prohibitions and taboos,
And the citizens become even poorer.
The citizens have many sharp tools,
And the nation and the families grow in confusion.
The people have too much knowledge and cleverness,
And strange things begin to increase.
Matters of law are increasingly proclaimed,
And more thieves and bandits exist.

Therefore : the sage says –
I use non-action, and the citizens naturally transform.
I cherish stillness, and the citizens naturally become honest and just.
I use non-interference, and the citizens naturally become wealthy.
I am without-desire, and the citizens naturally return to the state of the uncarved block.

Use *honesty and justness* when governing a nation.
Use *strange and unusual* [tactics] when commanding troops[2].
♦Use non-interference[2] to take hold of the world[2].
How do I thus know it is like this ?
By means of this :
♦The world[2] has many *prohibitions* and taboos,
[avoid,shun,abstain]
♦And the citizens become even[more] poorer.
♦The citizens have many sharp tools[A],
And the nation and the families grow in confusion.
The people have too much knowledge and cleverness,
♦And strange things begin to increase.
Matters of law are increasingly *proclaimed*,
[things] [made known]
♦And more thieves and bandits{traitors} exist.
Therefore : the sage[2] says –
♦I use non-action, and the citizens naturally transform.
♦I *cherish* stillness, and the citizens naturally become *honest and just*. [fond of]
♦I use non-interference[2], and the citizens naturally become wealthy.
I am without-desire, and the citizens naturally [return to the state of the] uncarved block.

Notes
A : *presumably, weapons*

Cross-references
be honest and just in governing : #8
honest and just, strange and unusual : #58
non-interference : #48, #63
possess or take hold of the world or nation : #29, #48, #59, #61
by using non-interference : #48
how do I thus know : #21, #54
by means of this : #21, #54
sharp tools : #36
nation *and* families : #18
thieves *and* bandits : #19
the sage says : #78
non-action : #2, #3, #37, #38, #43, #48, #63, #64
stillness : #15, #16, #26, #37, #45, #61
without-desire : #1, #3, #34, #37
uncarved block : #15, #19, #28, #32, #37
uncarved block brings without-desire : #37

Chapter Fifty Eight

其 政 悶 悶
其 民 淳 淳
其 政 察 察
其 民 缺 缺
禍 兮 福 之 所 倚 •
福 兮 禍 之 所 伏
孰 知 其 極
其 無 正 •
正 復 為 奇
善 復 為 妖
人 之 迷 •
其 日 固 久
是 以 聖 人
方 而 不 割
廉 而 不 劌
直 而 不 肆
光 而 不 燿

If their government is very restrained,
Its citizens will be very genuine and honest.
If their government is very observant and alert,
Its citizens will be very lacking and deficient.

Misfortune! is that which good fortune leans on.
Good fortune! is that which misfortune lies on.
Who knows their limits?
They are not honest and just.
Honesty and justness returns, becoming strange and unusual.
Virtue returns, becoming weird and strange.

The confusion of the people –
Its days have indeed been everlasting.

Thus the sage :
Is honest and does not divide,
Is honorable and does not injure,
Is straightforward and does not indulge in excess,
Is bright but does not dazzle.

♦If their government is [very] *restrained*, [smothered,tightly covered[2]]
Its citizens will be [very] *genuine and honest*[2A].
If their government is [very] *observant and alert*[2],
Its citizens will be [very] *lacking and deficient*[2].
Misfortune ! is that which good fortune [it] leans on.[B]
♦Good fortune ! is that which misfortune [it] lies on.
♦Who knows their *limits*[C]? [utmost,extreme]
♦They are not *honest and just*.
♦*Honesty and justness* returns, becoming *strange and unusual*.
♦Virtue returns, becoming *weird and strange*.
♦The confusion of the people –
♦Its days have *indeed* been *everlasting*. [undoubtedly] [for a long time]
Thus[2] the sage[2] :
♦Is honest[D] and does not divide[E],
Is honorable* and does not injure,
♦Is straightforward and does not *indulge in excess*,
Is bright but does not dazzle[F].

Notes
The very's in the first four lines are implied by the repeated symbols at the end of each line
A : every source has a different symbol here; this comes from WB
B : this line and the next can be translated many ways because of the numerous meanings of their last symbols (see the Introduction) – the translation given here is the most "neutral", saying only that they depend on each other
C : literally "their extremes", *presumably in the sense of "to what extremes they will go" or "how far will they go"*; compare to #59
D : this symbol also has the sense of "morally upright", "principled", and "ethical"
E : compare to #28 where the "greatest cutting does not divide" (also in relation to the sage)
F : every source has a different symbol, but three of them mean "to shine, dazzle, be glorious" thus making a majority in meaning; compare to how the sage does not "display" in #22, #47, #72, #77

Cross-references
observant and alert : #20
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #60, #64, #65, #80
honest and just, strange and unusual : #57
no harm : #35, #56, #60, #66, #81

Chapter Fifty Nine

治 人 事 天
莫 若 嗇
(•)夫 唯 嗇
是 謂 早 服
早 服 謂 之 重 積 德
重 積 德
則 無 不 克 •
無 不 克
則 莫 知 其 極
莫 知 其 極
可 以 有 國
有 國 之 母
可 以 長 久
是 謂 深 根 固 柢
長 生 久 視 之 道 • •

When governing people or doing heaven's duties,
It is better to be sparing.

Now : only when you can be sparing,
This is called early acceptance.
Early acceptance is called doubling your accumulation of De.
With a double accumulation of De,
Then everything can be overcome.
When everything can be overcome,
Then no one knows your limits.
When no one knows your limits,
You can possess the nation.
Possessing the mother of the nation,
You can forever endure.

This is called having a deep source and a firm foundation,
The Way of long life and enduring sight.

♦When governing people or doing heaven's duties,
♦It is better[2] to be *sparing*. [stingy,thrifty]
Now : only when you can be *sparing*, [stingy,thrifty]
This is called early *acceptance*[A]. [be convinced,serve]
Early *acceptance* is called doubling *your* accumulation of De. [be convinced,serve] [his]
With a double accumulation of De,
Then everything[2] can be overcome.
When everything[2] can be overcome,
Then no one knows *your limits*[B]. [his] [utmost,extreme]
♦When no one knows *your limits*[B], [his] [utmost,extreme]
♦You can[2] possess the nation.
♦Possessing the mother of the nation,
♦You can[2] forever *endure*. [for a long time]
This is called having a deep source and a firm foundation,
♦The Way of long life and *enduring* sight. [for a long time]

Notes
A : this is the most literal translation; GUO has
Thus you are prepared *in advance* [early]
B : literally "*your* extremes", *presumably in the sense of "to what extremes you will go" or "how far will you go"*; compare to #58

Cross-references
possess or take hold of the world or nation :
#29, #48, #57, #61
mother : #1, #20, #25, #52
can forever endure : #44

Chapter Sixty

治 大 國 若 烹 小 鮮
以 道 莅天 下
其 鬼 不 神
非 其 鬼 不 神 •
其 神 不 傷 人 •
非 其 神 不 傷 人 •
聖 人 亦 不 傷 人 •
夫 兩 不 相 傷
(•)故 德 交 歸 焉

Governing a great nation is like cooking a small fish.

Because Dao is present in the world,
Its ghosts do not have spirit.

Not that its ghosts do not have any spirit,
But their spirit does not injure people.

Not only does their spirit not injure people,
The sage also does not injure people.

Now : since these two do not injure each other,
Therefore their De merges and returns!

♦Governing a great nation is like cooking a small fish.[A]
♦Because Dao is present in the world[2],
♦Its ghosts do not have spirit.[B]
♦Not that its ghosts do not have [any] spirit,
♦But their spirit does not injure people.
♦Not [only] does their spirit not injure people,
The sage[2] also does not injure people.
♦Now : since these two do not injure each other,
♦Therefore their De *merges* and returns !
[intersects,exchanges,mixes]

Notes

A : compare this line to the first two lines of the previous chapter and it is easy to see why there has long been speculation that this line should end the previous chapter; however, there is an explicit end-of-chapter marker in GUO #59, and GUO does not even contain this chapter; *essentially this line is saying it is easy to ruin a small fish by overcooking, and it is easy to ruin a nation by over-controlling*

B : first – the "it" is literal, *presumably meaning "the world's ghosts"*; second – "ghosts" is the most literal, general term, but this could also be referring to demons (or possibly to souls of the ancestors); third – "spirit" might be better thought of in this chapter as "spiritual power", *thus this line seems to be saying that ghosts do not have any power in the world*; this and the next few lines can be translated in many different ways, due to the multiple meanings of the symbols for "ghost" and "spirit", and the lack of any reasonable context – *perhaps these lines were addressing some lost ancient scholarly debate or common cultural belief?*

Cross-references

no harm : #35, #56, #58, #66, #81
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #64, #65, #80
De *and* returning : #28, #65

Chapter Sixty One

大 國 者 下 流 •
天 下 之 交 •
天 下 之 牝 •
牝 常 以 靜 勝 牡
以 靜 為 下 •
(•)故 大 國 以 下 小 國
則 取 小 國
小 國 以 下 大 國
則 取 [於] 大 國
(•)故 或 下 以 取 •
或 下 而 取
大 國 不 過 欲 兼 畜 人
小 國 不 過 欲 入 事 人 •
夫 兩 者 各 得 [其] 所 欲 •
大 者 宜 為 下

A great nation is like the lowest places water can flow –
The merging place of the world,
The female of the world.

The female always uses stillness to conquer the male.
By using stillness, she becomes lower-than.

Therefore : if a great nation is lower-than a small nation,
Then it takes hold of the small nation.
If a small nation is lower-than a great nation,
Then it is taken hold of by the great nation.

Therefore : sometimes one nation is lower-than in order to take hold of,
Sometimes one nation is lower-than and then it is taken hold of.

A great nation merely desires to combine livestock and people,
A small nation merely desires to get work for its people.
Now : for both nations to each get that which is their desire,
It is proper for the great nation to be lower-than.

A great nation [it] is like the lowest places [water][A] can flow –
The *merging* place of the world[2], [intersection,exchange,mixing]
The female of the world[2].
The female always uses stillness to *conquer* the male. [victory,beat]
By using stillness, she becomes lower-than[B].
♦Therefore : if a great nation is [thus] lower-than a small nation,
♦Then it takes hold of the small nation.
♦If a small nation is [thus] lower-than a great nation,
Then it is taken hold of by the great nation.
♦Therefore : *sometimes* one [nation] is lower-than in order to take hold of, [maybe,perhaps]
♦*Sometimes* one [nation] is lower-than and then it is taken hold of. [maybe,perhaps]
A great nation merely[2] desires to combine livestock and people,
♦A small nation merely[2] desires to get work for its people.[C]
Now : for both *nations* to each get that which is their desire, [entities]
It is proper for the great *nation* to be lower-than. [entity]

Notes
A : 流 (flow) has associations with water
B : literally “below”, “under”, or “inferior”, here “lower-than” is used to indicate taking the lower or inferior position in a relationship (which in ancient Chinese culture was the better thing to do); Lau translates it as “taking the lower position”
C : the end of this line can also be translated as “desires to join and serve people”

Cross-references
feminine : #6, #10, #28
stillness : #15, #16, #26, #37, #45, #57
lower-than : #66, #68
possess or take hold of the world or nation : #29, #48, #57, #59

Chapter Sixty Two

道 者 萬 物 之 奧 •
善 人 之 寶 •
不 善 人 之 所 保 •
美 言 可 以 市 •
尊 行 可 以 加 人
人 之 不 善 •
何 棄 之 有 •
(•)故 立 天 子
置 三 公 •
雖 有 拱 璧 以 先 駟 馬
不 如 坐 進 此 道 •
古 之 所 以 貴 此 道 者 何 •
不 曰
以 求 得
有 罪 以 免 邪(•)
(•)故 為 天 下 貴

That which Daos is the obscure mystery of the ten thousand creatures.
This is the treasure of a virtuous person,
And that which is the protection of a person who is not virtuous.

Beautiful speech can be used in the market,
Respectful behavior can benefit people.
People who are not virtuous,
Why abandon them?

Therefore : when inaugurating the son of heaven,
Or installing the three nobles –
Even if you possessed jade disks drawn by a team of four horses,
That is not as good as sitting and offering this Way.

What was the ancients' reason that they valued this Way?
Did they not say :
Seek in order to obtain,
Have faults in order to be forgiven?

Therefore Dao becomes valuable to the world.

That which Daos is the *obscure mystery*[A] of the ten thousand creatures.
[This is] the treasure of a virtuous person,
♦And that which is the protection of a person who is not virtuous.
♦Beautiful speech can be used in the market,[B]
Respectful behavior[C] can[2] *benefit* people. [add,increase,augment]
♦People *who* are not virtuous, [they]
♦Why abandon *them*[2]? [their existence]
♦Therefore : when *inaugurating* the son of heaven[D], [establishing]
Or installing the three *nobles*[E] – [dukes]
Even if you possessed jade disks[2] *drawn by*[2] a team of four horses,[F] [using,by means of before]
That is not as good as sitting and offering this Way.
♦What was the ancient 's reason that[2] they valued this Way?
Did they not say :
Seek in order to obtain,
Have faults in order to be *forgiven* ? [exempt,spare,excuse]
♦Therefore [Dao][G] becomes valuable to the world[2].

Notes
A : although they are in the minority, I rather like what the MWD's say :
That which Daos is the *flowing together* of the ten thousand creatures
B : *presumably, for bartering*
C : these two symbols could just as likely be translated as "honorable *deeds*"
D: the "son of heaven" is a standard phrase referring to the emperor
E : specifically Dukes (see #32), but in keeping with other chapters, this is interpreted more generally as "nobles"; the phrase "three Dukes" specifically refers to the highest state officials, advisors, or ministers
F : a very expensive and impressive offering, indeed!
G : there is no subject in the original Chinese; Dao is assumed based on the 4th line previous

Cross-references
mystery : #1, #6, #10, #15, #27, #51, #56, #65
treasure : #67, #69
one who is not virtuous : #27, #49, #81
nobles (in general) : #32, #37, #39, #42, #80
the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #22, #38, #39, #65, #68
being valuable : #56, #70
therefore becomes valuable to the world : #56

Chapter Sixty Three

• 為 無 為 •
事 無 事 •
味 無 味
大 小 多 少
報 怨 以 德 •
圖 難 於 其 易
為 大 於 其 細 •
天 下 難 事 必 作 於 易
天 下 大 事 必 作 於 細 •
是 以 聖 人 終 不 為 大
(•)故 能 成 其 大
夫 輕 諾 必 寡 信
多 易 必 多 難 •
是 以 聖 人 猶 難 之 •
(•)故 終 無 難 矣(•) •

Act with non-action.
Handle duties with non-interference.
Taste that which is without-flavor.

Greatness is insignificant, too much is less.
Repay animosity with De.

Plan for the difficult while it is easy.
Act on the great while it is tiny.
In the world, difficult duties certainly start while easy.
In the world, great duties certainly start while tiny.

Thus the sage in the end does not act great,
Therefore he can achieve his greatness.

Men who make promises lightly, certainly few will trust.
Men who expect most duties to be easy will certainly have many difficulties.

Thus the sage plans for things to be difficult,
Therefore in the end he is without difficulty!

♦Act with non-action.
♦Handle duties with non-interference[2].
♦Taste [that which] is without-flavor.[A]
Greatness is insignificant, too much is less.
♦Repay *animosity with* De.
[complaints/resentment/hatred] [by means of]
Plan for the difficult *while* it is easy. [<preposition>]
Act on the great *while* it is tiny. [<preposition>]
In the world[2], difficult duties certainly *start while* easy.
[arise] [<preposition>]
In the world[2], great duties certainly *start while* tiny.
[arise] [<preposition>]
♦Thus[2] the sage[2] in the end does not act great,
♦Therefore he can achieve his greatness.
♦Men who make promises lightly, certainly few will trust*.
♦[Men who expect] *most* [duties to be] easy will certainly have many difficulties.[B] [too many]
Thus[2] the sage[2] *plans* for *things* to be difficult,
[schemes] [them]
Therefore in the end he is without difficulty !

Notes
Only the first four sentences and the last three are in GUO.
A : this line could also be translated as
Taste without tasting
or
Taste by non-tasting
but it is phrased this way because of the reference in #35 about how Dao's words are "without flavor" (using the same two symbols in both chapters)
B : this line literally reads "too many easy certainly too many difficult" but is worded in this way due to the lines that precede and follow it

Cross-references
non-action : #2, #3, #37, #38, #43, #48, #57, #64
non-interference : #48, #57
sage can achieve greatness : #34
sage plans for difficulties : #73

Chapter Sixty Four

• 其安易持 •
其未兆易謀 •
其脆易泮 •
其微易散 •
為之於未有 •
治之於未亂
合抱之木生於毫末
九層之臺起於累土
千里之行始於足下 •
為者敗之
執者失之
是以聖人
無為故無敗 •
無執故無失 •
民之從事常於幾成而敗之 •
慎終如始
則無敗事 •
是以聖人
欲不欲
不貴難得之貨
學不學 •
復眾人之所過 •
以輔萬物之自然
而不敢為 •

What is peaceful is easy to hold.
What has not yet been revealed is easy to plan for.
What is brittle is easy to shatter.
What is minute is easy to scatter.
Act on it while it does not yet exist.
Govern them while they are not yet confused.

A tree too big to embrace is created from the tiniest shoot.
A terrace of nine stories rises from a pile of dirt.
A journey of a thousand miles begins from under the feet.

He who acts, ruins it.
He who grasps, loses it.

Thus the sage :
Does not act, therefore he does not ruin.
Does not grasp, therefore he does not lose.

Citizens are always on the verge of achieving their undertakings, yet they ruin them.
Be as careful in the end as if it was the beginning,
Then you will not ruin your affairs.

Thus the sage :
Desires to not desire,
Does not value rare goods,
Learns to not learn.

He returns to that which everyone else has passed over,
Thus helping the ten thousand creatures to be naturally so,
Yet not daring to act.

♦*What* is peaceful is easy to hold. [it]
♦*What* has not yet been *revealed* is easy to plan for. [it] [omen,sign,portent]
♦*What* is brittle is easy to *shatter*. [it] [fall apart]
What is minute is easy to scatter. [it]
♦Act on it *while* it does not yet exist. [<preposition>]
♦Govern them *while* they are not yet confused. [<preposition>]
♦A tree [←] too big to embrace[2] is created from the *tiniest shoot*. [least] [tip,end]
A terrace[A] of nine stories rises from a pile of *dirt*. [soil,land,ground]
A *journey* of a thousand miles[B] begins from under the feet. [travel]
♦He who acts, ruins it.
♦He who grasps, loses it.
♦Thus[2] the sage[2] :
♦Does not act, therefore he does not ruin.
♦Does not grasp, therefore he does not lose.
Citizens are always on the *verge* of achieving their undertakings[2], yet they ruin them. [almost]
Be as careful in the end as if it was the beginning,
Then you will not ruin your affairs.
♦Thus[2] the sage[2] :
♦Desires to not desire,
♦Does not value rare[2] [→] goods,
♦Learns to not learn.
He returns to that which everyone[2] else [they] has *passed over*,
Thus helping the ten thousand creatures [them] to be naturally so[2],
Yet not daring to act.[C]

Notes

A : in ancient China, terraces were man-made hills with paths cut into in their sides, leading up to a plateau at the top from which to view the surrounding landscape
B : around the time the DDJ was written, a 里 was probably equal to about 1/3 of a mile
C : this line is intentionally left ambiguous as to whether it is the sage or the creatures that do not dare to act, as it is also ambiguous in the original Chinese

Cross-references

he who acts, ruins it : #29
he who grasps, loses it : #29
non-action : #2, #3, #37, #38, #43, #48, #57, #63
rare goods : #3, #12
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #65, #80
naturally so : #17, #23, #25, #51
not daring to act : #3, #67, #69

Chapter Sixty Five

古 之 善 為 道 者
非 以 明 民 •
將 以 愚 之 •
民 之 難 治 •
以 其 (知) 多 •
(•)故 以 (知) 治 國
國 之 賊 •
不 以 (知) 治 國
國 之 福 •
知 此 兩 者亦 稽 式 •
常 知 稽 式
是 謂 玄 德
玄 德 深 矣 遠 矣(•)
與 物 反 矣(•)
__ __ 乃 至 大 順

The virtue of the ancients (they who acted in Dao),
Did not use it to enlighten the citizens,
But would have used it to keep them ignorant –
The citizens are hard to govern
Because they have too much knowledge.

Therefore : using knowledge to govern the nation
Is the bane of the nation.
Not using knowledge to govern the nation
Is the good fortune of the nation.
He who has knowledge of these two also has them as examples.

To always understand these examples –
This is called deep and mysterious De.
Deep and mysterious De is so profound! and remote!
That when creatures return, it returns with them!
Then they reach the greatest harmony.

♦The virtue of the ancients (they who acted in Dao),
♦Did not use it to *enlighten* the citizens,
[wise,sight→*insight*]
♦But would have used it to keep them *ignorant*[A] –
[stupid,foolish]
♦The citizens [they] are hard to govern
Because they have too much knowledge[B].
Therefore : using knowledge[B] to govern the nation
Is the *bane* of the nation. [evil]
Not using knowledge[B] to govern the nation
Is the good fortune of the nation.
♦He who has knowledge of these two also has [them as] examples[2].
To always understand these examples[2] –
This is called *deep and mysterious* De.
♦*Deep and mysterious* De is so profound ! and remote !
♦That when creatures return[C], it returns [together]with them !
Then they reach the greatest *harmony*.
[go along with,same direction,agreeable]

Notes
A : ignorance here is a good thing, as in #20 where the sage is foolish (using the same symbol)
B : only WB and HSG have the Confucian term "wisdom" here, making these sentences anti-Confucian
C : as in #25, where "being remote speaks of returning"; this sentence could also be translated as
That it *helps* [all] creatures to return !

Cross-references
the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #22, #38, #39, #62, #68
virtue of the ancients : #15
he who "possesses Dao" : #15, #23, #24, #31, #77
citizens are hard to govern : #75
mystery : #1, #6, #10, #15, #27, #51, #56, #62
deep and mysterious De : #10, #51
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #80
De *and* returning : #28, #60
remote : #25
remote *and* returning : #25

Chapter Sixty Six

江 海 所 以 能 為 百 谷 王 者
以 其 善 下 之 •
(•)故 能 為 百 谷 王
是 以 [聖 人]
欲 上 民 •
必 以 言 下 之
欲 先 民 •
必 以 身 後 之
是 以 聖 人
處 上 而 民 不 重 •
處 前 而 民 不 害 •
是 以 天 下 樂 推 而 不 厭 •
以 其 不 爭 •
(•)故 天 下 莫 能 與 之 爭

The reason that rivers and seas can act as kings of the 100 valleys
Is because they are good at being lower-than them.
Therefore : they can act as kings of the 100 valleys.

Thus the sage :
In desiring to be above the citizens,
He must by means of his speech be lower-than them.
In desiring to be before the citizens,
He must by means of his self be behind them.

Thus the sage :
Lives above them, but the citizens are not burdened.
Lives in front of them, but the citizens are not harmed.
Thus the world is pleased to promote him, and does not tire of him.

Because he does not strive,
Therefore no one in the world can strive against him.

The reason that[2] rivers and seas [they] can act as kings of the 100 valleys
Is because they are good at being lower-than[A] them.
Therefore : they can act as kings of the 100 valleys.
Thus[2] the sage[2] :
In desiring to be above[B] the citizens,
He must by means of his speech be lower-than them.
In desiring to be before[C] the citizens,
He must by means of his self be behind them.
Thus[2] the sage[2] :
Lives above them, but the citizens are not *burdened*.
[heavy]
Lives in front of them, but the citizens are not harmed.
Thus[2] the world[2] is pleased to promote him, and does not tire of{despise} him.
Because he does not strive,
♦Therefore no one in the world[2] can strive *against* him.
[together with]

Notes
A : literally “below”, “under”, or “inferior”, here “lower-than” is used to indicate taking the lower or inferior position in a relationship (which in ancient Chinese culture was the better thing to do); Lau translates it as “taking the lower position”
B : *presumably, to rule over*
C : *presumably, to lead*

Cross-references
valley : #6, #15, #28, #32, #39, #41
lower-than : #61, #68
before/behind others : #7, #67
self : #7, #9, #13, #16, #26, #44, #52, #54
no harm : #35, #56, #58, #60, #81
not tire of leadership : #72
no striving : #3, #8, #22, #68, #73, #81
no one in the world can strive against him : #22

Chapter Sixty Seven

天 下 皆 謂 我 __ 大 似 不 肖 (•)夫 唯 (不 肖) 故 [能] (大) • 若 肖 • 久 矣 其 細 也(•) (•)夫 我 有 三 寶 持 而 保 之 • 一 曰 慈 • 二 曰 儉 三 曰 不 敢 為 天 下 先 慈 故 能 勇 儉 故 能 廣 不 敢 為 天 下 先 (•)故 能 成 器 長 • 今 舍 慈 且 勇 • 舍 儉 且 廣 舍 後 且 先 死 矣(•) (•)夫 慈 以 戰 則 勝 以 守 則 固 天 將 救 之 以 慈 衛 之	In the world, all say I am great, But do not seem to be like everyone else. Now : only because I am not like everyone else, therefore I can be great. If I was like everyone else, Long ago! I would have become insignificant, indeed! Now : I possess three treasures – Hold and maintain them. The first is called compassion, The second is called economy, The third is called not daring to act first in the world. With compassion, you can therefore be brave. With economy, you can therefore expand. By not daring to act first in the world, Therefore you can achieve the capacity for leadership. At present, people abandon compassion but also try to be brave, Abandon economy but also try to expand, Abandon being behind but also try to be first – This is death! Now : when compassion is used in war, the consequence is victory. When it is used for protection, the consequence is strength. When heaven would help you, Using compassion it protects you.

In the world[2], all say I am great,[A]
But do not seem to be like [everyone else].[B]
Now : only [because I am] not like [everyone else],
therefore I can be great.[C]
♦If [I was] like [everyone else],
Long ago ! *I* would have become *insignificant*, indeed!
[he] [minute,tiny]
Now : I possess three treasures –
Hold and maintain them.
♦The first is called compassion*,
♦The second is called *economy*, [thrifty,frugal]
♦The third is called not daring to act first[D] in the world[2].
♦With compassion*, you can therefore be brave*.
♦With *economy*, you can therefore expand[E]. [thrifty,frugal]
♦By not daring to act first in the world[2],
Therefore you can achieve the capacity for leadership.
At present, people abandon compassion* but also try to be brave*,
Abandon *economy* but also try to expand[E], [thrifty,frugal]
Abandon being behind but also try to be first –
This is death !
Now : when compassion* is used in war, the consequence is victory.
♦When it is used for protection, the consequence is strength.
When heaven would help *you*, [him]
Using compassion* it protects *you*. [him]

Notes

A : this may sound egotistical, but the sage is described as being "great" in #34 and #63 and "valued" in #70; only WB and HSG changed this and the next four lines to read

In the world[2], all say my Dao is great,
And does not seem to be like [anything else].
Now : only [because it is] great, therefore it does not seem to be like [anything else].
If [it was] like [anything else],
Long ago ! it would have become *insignificant*, indeed!

WB also switched from saying the sage is great to Dao is great in #34; also note that here it is everyone else, not the sage, who says the sage is great

B : see #20 for many examples of how the sage is not like everyone else; this and the next three lines are translated in many different ways because 肖 ("seem", "resemble") sounds the same as a different symbol meaning "small" and so is sometimes interpreted that way, and because 不 肖 can also mean "unworthy"

C : this sentence comes from MWD/B for consistency with the previous lines

D : *presumably take the lead, rule, etc.*; compare to #7 and #66 about being behind to be first

E : *this could be referring to expanding your territory or kingdom*

Cross-references

treasures : #62, #69
not daring to act : #3, #64
before/behind others : #7, #66
die/death : #6, #33, #42, #50, #74, #75, #76, #80
strong : #3, #29, #30, #33, #36, #52, #55, #78

Chapter Sixty Eight

善為士者不武•
善戰者不怒•
善勝敵者不與
善用人者為之下
是謂不爭之德
是謂用人之力
是謂配天古之極 [也(•)]

He who is good at being a scholar is not militant.
He who is good at war does not get angry.
He who is good at conquering the enemy does not engage them.
He who is good at making use of people acts lower-than them.

This is called the De of not striving.
This is called the power of making use of people.
This is called joining the elite of heaven's ancients, indeed!

♦He who is good at being a scholar is not *militant*. [martial,warlike]
♦He who is good at war does not get angry.
♦He who is good at *conquering* the enemy does not *engage* them. [victory,beat] [take part in,participate]
♦He who is good at making use of people acts lower-than[A] them.
This is called the De of not striving.
This is called the power of making use of people.[B]
This is called joining the *elite* of heaven's ancients, indeed![C] [highest,utmost]

Notes
A : literally "below", "under", or "inferior", here "lower-than" is used to indicate taking the lower or inferior position in a relationship (which in ancient Chinese culture was the better thing to do); Lau translates it as "taking the lower position"
B : This could also be translated as
This is called using the power of people
but based on the sentence two lines before which has no such ambiguity, it is translated this way
C : the grammar of this sentence is exceptionally difficult to parse, and so can be translated in many different ways

Cross-references
scholar : #15, #41
lower-than : #61, #66
no striving : #3, #8, #22, #66, #73, #81
the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #22, #38, #39, #62, #65

Chapter Sixty Nine

• 用 兵 有 言 吾 不 敢 為 主 而 為 客 不 敢 進 寸 而 退 尺 是 謂 行 無 行 攘 無 臂 • 扔 無 敵 執 無 兵 禍 莫 大 於 輕 敵 輕 敵 幾 喪 吾 寶 • (•)故 抗 兵 相 (若) [則] 哀 者 勝 矣(•)	Those who command troops have a saying : I dare not act like the master, but instead act like a guest. Dare not advance an inch, but instead retreat a foot. This is called marching without marching, Seizing without using your arms, Routing without having an enemy, Defending without using weapons. There is no misfortune greater than underestimating the enemy. By underestimating the enemy, I nearly lose my treasures. Therefore : when armies on opposing sides are evenly matched, Then they who mourn will be victorious!
Those who command troops[2] have a saying : ♦I dare not act like the master, but instead act like a guest. Dare not advance an inch[A], but instead retreat a foot[B]. This is called *marching* without *marching*, [travelling] [travelling] ♦Seizing without using your arms[C], *Routing* without having an enemy, [throw out] *Defending*[D] without using weapons. [hold,maintain] There is no misfortune greater than *underestimating* the enemy.[E] [frivolous,unimportant] By *underestimating* the enemy, I nearly lose my treasures. [frivolous,unimportant] Therefore : when armies on opposing sides are *evenly matched*, [similar,like each other,comparable[2]] Then they who mourn[F] will be victorious !	Notes A : 寸 was a unit of length, very close to one inch B : 尺 was a unit of length, very close to one foot C : this symbol is definitely referring to the limb, not the English synonym for "weapons"; this and the next two lines can be translated in many ways due to their terseness D : as in "hold the fort" or "maintain your position" E : there is a great deal of variation between the sources for this line and the next, so WB and HSG are taken as the "standard"; each later source made changes to try to turn it into something that made sense! F : *presumably, mourning the need to fight and/or the death it involves*; compare to #31, where war is compared to dwelling at a funeral Cross-references not daring to act : #3, #64, #67 treasures : #62, #67

Chapter Seventy

吾 言 甚 易 知 •
甚 易 行 •
[而] 天 下 莫 [之] 能 知 •
莫 [之] 能 行 •
言 有 宗 •
事 有 君
(•)夫 唯 無 知 •
是 以 不 我 知 •
知 我 者 希
則 我 者 貴 [矣(•)]
是 以 聖 人
被 褐 [而] 懷 玉

My words are very easy to understand,
Very easy to practice.
But there is no one in the world who can understand them,
There is no one who can practice them.

My words possess a lineage,
My duties possess a ruler.

Now : only because I am without-knowledge,
Thus I am not understood.
Those who understand me are rare,
Consequently I am one who is valued!

Thus the sage wears coarse cloth, but carries jade in his heart.

♦My words are very easy to understand,
♦Very easy to *practice*. [perform]
But there is no one in the world[2] *who* can understand them, [they]
There is no one *who* can *practice* them. [they] [perform]
♦[My][A] words possess a lineage,
[My][A] duties possess a ruler.
♦Now : only because [I am][B] without-knowledge,
♦Thus[2] I am not understood.
♦Those who understand me are rare,
Consequently I am one who is valued !
♦Thus[2] the sage[2] wears coarse cloth, but carries jade in his heart.

Notes
A : "My" is inferred here from the first line, but could just as reasonably be left out, or "All" substituted
B : there is no subject in the original Chinese, so this could also be saying "only because [the previous two lines] is not understood", but because 無 知 (without-knowledge) is specifically used, it is translated in this way

Cross-references
no one who can practice this : #78
being valuable : #56, #62

Chapter Seventy One

知 不 知 (尚) [矣(•)]
不 知 知 病 [矣(•)]
(•)夫 唯 病 病
是 以 不 病
聖 人 不 病 •
以 其 病 病 •
是 以 不 病

Knowing that you do not know is honorable!
Not knowing that you know is a sickness!

Now : only when you are sick of sickness,
Thus you are not sick.

The sage is not sick
Because he is sick of sickness.
Thus he is not sick.

Knowing that you do not know is honorable !
Not knowing that you know is a sickness !
Now : only when you are sick of sickness,
Thus[2] you are not sick.
The sage[2] is not sick
♦Because he is sick of sickness.
♦Thus[2] he is not sick.

Notes
The third and fourth lines are not in the MWD's

This chapter can be translated many different ways due to its terseness and the many ways to interpret 病 (disease, sickness, to be ill)

"*Sickness" here presumably refers to the suffering that comes from not following Dao*

Cross-references

Chapter Seventy Two

民 不 畏 威 則 大 威 至 [矣(•)] • 無 狎 其 所 居 無 厭 其 所 生 (•)夫 唯 不 厭 是 以 不 厭 是 以 聖 人 自 知 不 自 見 • 自 愛 不 自 貴 • (•)**故 去 彼 取 此**	If the citizens do not fear your authority, Then a greater authority will arrive! Do not disrespect their dwellings, Do not despise their livelihood. Now : only because you do not despise them, Thus they will not tire of you. Thus the sage : Knows himself but not display himself, Loves himself but does not exalt himself. Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.
If the citizens do not fear [your] authority, Then a greater authority will arrive ![A] ♦Do not disrespect their dwellings[2], ♦Do not *despise* their *livelihood*[2B]. [detest] [that which they produce] ♦Now : only because [you] do not *despise* [them], [detest] ♦Thus[2] [they] will not tire of{detest}[C] [you]. ♦Thus[2] the sage[2] : ♦Knows himself but not *display* himself, [show] ♦Loves himself but does not *exalt* himself. [high rank,respected] Therefore he leaves that[D] and chooses this[E].	Notes A : *possibly meaning someone else will take over, either from within or without?* B : these two symbols could also be translated as "place of birth" or even "parents" (they who gave them life) C : this seems to be something of a play on words, because the symbol for "despise" in the previous line is the same symbol for "tire of", so this line could also be translated as Thus[2] they will not *despise* you but "tire of" is used here because of #66, where the citizens do not tire of the sage's rule D : *presumably, displaying and exalting* E : *presumably, knowing and loving* Cross-references fear/afraid : #15, #17, #20, #74 citizens do not fear : #74 not tire of leadership : #66 not displaying oneself (showing off) : #22, #24, #47, #77 leaves that and chooses this : #12, #38

Chapter Seventy Three

• 勇 於 敢
則 殺
勇 於 不 敢
則 活
此 兩 者 或 利 或 害
天 之 所 惡 孰 知 其 故
是 以 聖 人 猶 難 之
天 之 道
不 爭 而 善 勝 •
不 言 而 善 應 •
不 召 而 自 來
繟 然 而 善 謀
天 網 恢 恢
疏 而 不 失

When your courage lies in daring,
The consequence is killing.
When your courage lies in not daring,
The consequence is survival.

These two choices, they sometimes cause benefit,
sometimes cause harm.
That which heaven detests – who knows its reasons?

The Way of heaven :
Does not strive, yet skillfully achieves its goals.
Does not speak, yet skillfully responds.
Does not summon, yet everything naturally comes to it.
Is certainly unhurried, yet skillfully prepares.

Heaven’s net is extremely vast;
It is wide meshed, yet does not fail.

♦When your courage* lies in daring,
♦The consequence is killing.
♦When your courage* lies in not daring,
♦The consequence is survival.
♦These two [choices], they *sometimes* cause benefit,
sometimes cause harm.
[maybe,perhaps] [maybe,perhaps]
♦That which heaven [it] detests[A] – who knows its reasons?
Thus[2] the sage[2] *plans* for *things* to be difficult.[B]
[them] [schemes]
♦The Way of heaven :
♦Does not strive, yet skillfully *achieves its goals*.
[victory,beat]
♦Does not speak, yet skillfully responds.
♦Does not summon, yet everything naturally comes to it.
Is certainly *unhurried*, yet skillfully *prepares*.[C]
[slow,patient,calm] [plans]
♦Heaven’s net is *extremely vast*[2D];
♦It is *wide meshed*, yet does not fail. [sparce]

Notes
There are two themes in this chapter which do not seem to fit in with typical Daoist concepts – that of heaven conquering (literally “victory” or “beat”, interpreted as “achieving its goals”) which sounds more like striving than non-action, and planning (interpreted as “prepares”) which seems contradictory to being “naturally so” (although the sage also “plans” here and in #63)
A : *in early societies, whatever endeavors failed were by definition what heaven (or the gods) “detested”*
B : this sentence only appears in the later sources, and seems to be a parenthetical comment; although it technically is in the majority, it seems so out-of-place that it is left out of the final translation above
C : this sentence is nearly impossible to translate; while the first symbol in WB and HSG are the same, making them the default “majority”, it is different in every other source, and none of their modern translations make sense; some translators use a symbol slightly different than that in WB and HSG but pronounced the same way; finally, “slow, patient, calm” is only the most likely translation that could be found for the first symbol
D : “extremely” is implied by the repeated symbol

Cross-references
the sage plans for difficulties : #63
Way of heaven : #9, #47, #77, #79, #81
no striving : #3, #8, #22, #66, #68, #81

Chapter Seventy Four

<table>
<tr>
<td>
民 不 畏 死
奈 何 以 死 懼 之 •
若 使 民 常 畏 死
而 為 奇 者 吾 得 執 而 殺 之 •
孰 敢 •
常 有 司 殺 者 __
(•)夫 代 司 殺 者 殺 •
是 謂 代 大 匠 斲 •
(•)夫 代 大 匠 斲 者
希 __ 不 傷 其 手 矣(•)
</td>
<td>
If the citizens do not fear death,
How can you use death to frighten them?
Assuming you could ensure that the citizens always fear death,
And I get hold of those who act strange and unusual and kill them,
Then who would be daring?

There will always exist an executioner.
Now : to take the place of the executioner to do the killing,
This is called taking the place of a great craftsman to carve wood.
Now : of those who take the place of a great craftsman to carve wood,
Few will not injure their hand!
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>
If the <u>citizens</u> do <u>not</u> <u>fear</u> <u>death</u>,
<u>How</u>[2] can you <u>use</u> <u>death</u> to <u>frighten</u> <u>them</u>?
<u>Assuming</u> you could ensure that the <u>citizens</u> <u>always</u> <u>fear</u> <u>death</u>, [<u>make,cause</u>]
<u>And</u> <u>I</u> <u>get</u> <u>hold</u> of <u>those who</u> <u>act</u> <u>strange and unusual</u> <u>and</u> <u>kill</u> <u>them</u>,
Then <u>who</u> would be <u>daring</u>{<u>bold</u>}?
There will <u>always</u> <u>exist</u> an executioner[3A]. [<u>he who</u> <u>attends to/manages</u> <u>killing</u>]
♦<u>Now</u> : to <u>take the place of</u> the executioner[3] to do the <u>killing</u>, [<u>he who</u> <u>attends to/manages</u> <u>killing</u>]
<u>This is</u> <u>called</u> <u>taking the place of</u> a <u>great</u> <u>craftsman</u> to <u>carve wood</u>.
♦<u>Now</u> : of <u>those who</u> <u>take the place of</u> a <u>great</u> <u>craftsman</u> to <u>carve wood</u>,
Few will <u>not</u> <u>injure</u> <u>their</u> <u>hand</u> <u>!</u> [<u>rare,infrequent</u>]
</td>
<td>
<u>Notes</u>
A : it is speculated by some that this refers to heaven or Dao, and while that does make sense in context of the lines that follow, there is no direct support for it in the original Chinese

<u>Cross-references</u>
fear/afraid : #15, #17, #20, #72
citizens do not fear : #72
die/death : #6, #33, #42, #50, #67, #75, #76, #80
citizens do not fear death, take death seriously/lightly : #75, #80
</td>
</tr>
</table>

Chapter Seventy Five

• 民 之 饑 •
以 其 上 食 稅 之 多 •
是 以 饑
民 之 難 治 •
以 其 上 之 有 為 •
是 以 難 治 •
民 之 輕 死 •
以 其 求 生 之 厚 •
是 以 輕 死
(•)夫 唯 無 以 生 為 者
是 賢 於 貴 生 •

The citizens are hungry
Because their superiors eat too much of their taxes.
Thus they are hungry.

The citizens are hard to govern
Because their superiors are compelled to take action.
Thus they are hard to govern.

The citizens take death lightly
Because they seek the substance of life.
Thus they take death lightly.

Now : only he who has no use for being alive
Is virtuous compared to he who values living.

The citizens [they] are hungry
Because their superiors eat too much of their taxes.[A]
Thus[2] they are hungry.
The citizens [they] are hard to govern
Because their superiors [they] are *compelled* to take action[B]. [possess]
Thus[2] they are hard to govern.
♦The citizens [they] take death lightly
Because they[C] seek the substance[D] of life.
♦Thus[2] they take death lightly.
Now : only he who has no use for being alive
Is virtuous compared to [he who] values living.[E]

Notes
A : taxes were taken in grain at the time the DDJ was written, so this seems to be something of a play on words
B : literally, they "possess action"
C : HSG and FY have
Because their superiors seek the substance of life
thus placing the blame not on the people, but those who govern them (WB used the viewpoint of the earlier sources)
D : compare to #38, where living for the "substance" is apparently a good thing, and #50, where it is a bad thing
E : *one who "values living" will be less virtuous than one who does not, because the former is out to get what he can for himself*

Cross-references
citizens are hard to govern : #65
die/death : #6, #33, #42, #50, #67, #74, #76, #80
citizens do not fear death, take death seriously/lightly : #74, #80
substance : #38, #50, #55

Chapter Seventy Six

• 人之生也柔弱
其死也堅強 •
萬物草木之生也柔脆
其死也枯槁 •
(•)故堅強者死之徒 •
柔弱者生之徒 •
是以兵強則不勝
木強則兵 •
強大處下 •
柔弱處上

The people are born (indeed!) soft and weak.
They die (indeed!) hard and inflexible.
The ten thousand creatures, the grass and trees, are born (indeed!) soft and fragile.
They die (indeed!) dried and withered.

Therefore : that which is hard and inflexible is a follower of death.
That which is soft and weak is a follower of life.

Thus if a weapon is inflexible, the consequence is defeat.
If a tree is inflexible, then it snaps.

Inflexible and great dwell below.
Soft and weak dwell above.

♦The people [they] are born (indeed!) soft and weak.
They die (indeed!) hard and inflexible.
The ten thousand creatures, the grass and trees, [they] are born (indeed!) soft and fragile.
♦They die (indeed!) dried and withered.
Therefore : that which is hard and inflexible is a follower[A] of death.
That which is soft and weak is a follower of life.
Thus[2] if a weapon is inflexible, the consequence is *defeat*[2].[B] [not victory]
If a tree is inflexible, then it *snaps*°.
Inflexible and great dwell below[C].
Soft and weak dwell above.

Notes
A : “follower” as in disciple or one who agrees with a particular way of looking at things
B : *an inflexible weapon shatters easily*; this line can be translated in many ways, because “weapon is inflexible” can also mean
weapon is strong
army is inflexible
army is strong
C : interestingly, this is the same symbol translated in #61, #66, and #68 as “lower-than” (which was a good thing), so in this case it is the inferior qualities which are lower-than

Cross-references
soft : #10, #36, #43, #52, #55, #78
weak : #3, #29, #36, #40, #55, #78
die/death : #6, #33, #42, #50, #67, #74, #75, #80
hard : #36, #43, #78
follower of death *and* follower of life : #50

Chapter Seventy Seven

天 之 道 其 猶 張 弓 與 •
高 者 抑 之 •
下 者 舉 之
有 餘 者 損 之 •
不 足 者 補 之 •
天 之 道
損 有 餘 而 補 不 足
人 之 道 則 不 然
損 不 足 以 奉 有 餘
孰 能 有 餘 (而) 奉 [於] 天 下
唯 有 道 者 •
是 以 聖 人
為 而 不 恃
功 成 而 不 處 •
其 不 欲 見 賢 •

The Way of heaven, how it is just like stretching a bow?
He who is high is pressed down by it.
He who is low is lifted by it.
He who has excess is reduced by it.
He who does not have enough is filled by it.

The Way of heaven
Reduces what has excess and fills what does not have enough.
The Way of people on the other hand is not like this,
And takes from those who do not have enough in order to offer it to those who have too much.

Who can have too much and offer it to the world?
Only he who possesses Dao.

Thus the sage :
Acts, but is not concerned with the results.
Accomplishes his tasks, but does not dwell on them.
He does not desire to display his virtue.

The Way of heaven, how it is just like stretching a bow ?
He who is high is pressed down by it.
He who is low is lifted by it.
He who has excess is *reduced* by it. [decrease]
He who does not have enough is filled by it.
The Way of heaven
Reduces what has excess and fills what does not have enough. [decrease]
The Way of people *on the other hand* is not like this, [<contrast>]
And *takes from* [those who] do not have enough in order to offer it to [those who] have *too much*. [decreases] [excess]
Who can have *too much* and offer it to the world[2]? [excess]
Only he who possesses Dao.
Thus[2] the sage[2] :
Acts, but is not *concerned with* [the results]. [depend upon,rely upon]
Accomplishes his *tasks*, but does not dwell on them. [results,achievements]
He does not desire to *display* his virtue. [show]

Notes

Cross-references
Way of heaven : #9, #47, #73, #79, #81
he who “possesses Dao” : #15, #23, #24, #31, #65
acting but not concerned : #2, #10, #51
accomplishing tasks : #2, #9, #17, #34
and not dwelling on them : #2, #9
not displaying oneself (showing off) : #22, #24, #47, #72

Chapter Seventy Eight

天 下 莫 柔 弱 於 水
而 攻 堅 強 者
莫 之 能 勝 •
以 其 無 以 易 之 •
弱 之 勝 強 •
柔 之 勝 剛 • •
天 下 莫 不 知 •
莫 能 行 •
是 以 聖 人 云 •
受 國 之 垢
是 謂 社 稷 [之] 主
受 國 [之] 不 祥
是 謂 天 下 [之] 王
正 言 若 反 •

In the world, nothing is softer and weaker than water.
Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong,
There is nothing that can surpass it.
This is because it endlessly replaces itself.

Weakness conquers strength.
Softness conquers hardness.
In the world, there is no one who does not know this,
But there is no one who can practice it.

Thus the sage says :
Accepting upon oneself the disgrace of the nation
Is called being master of the shrines.
Accepting upon oneself the misfortune of the nation
Is called being king of the world.

Honest words seem contrary.

♦In the world[2], nothing is softer and weaker than water.
♦Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong,
♦There is nothing *that* can surpass it. [them]
♦This is because it endlessly[2] replaces{changes} it[self].[A]
Weakness [it] *conquers* strength. [victorious,beats]
Softness [it] *conquers* hardness. [victorious,beats]
In the world[2], there is no one who does not know this,
But there is no one who can *practice* it. [perform]
Thus[2] the sage[2] says :
Accepting [upon oneself] the disgrace of the nation
Is called being master of the shrines[2B].
Accepting [upon oneself] the *misfortune* [2] of the nation [not lucky]
Is called being king of the world[2].
♦Honest words seem contrary.

Notes

A : the grammar of this sentence is very difficult to parse; I do not know if 無以 meant "endlessly" when the DDJ was written, but this is the only translation that seems to make sense

B : the symbols specifically refer to the shrine of the god of soil, and the shrine of the god of grain

Cross-references

soft : #10, #36, #43, #52, #55, #76
weak : #3, #29, #36, #40, #55, #76
hard : #36, #43, #76
strong : #3, #29, #30, #33, #36, #52, #55, #67
soft conquers hard : #36, #43
no one who can practice it : #70
the sage says : #57

Chapter Seventy Nine

和 大 怨
必 有 餘 怨 •
安 可 以 為 善
是 以 聖 人
執 左 契
而 不 責 於 人
[(•)故] 有 德 司 契
無 德 司 徹
天 道 無 親
常 與 善 人

Harmonize a great resentment,
And there must exist some remaining resentment.
How can this be considered good?

Thus the sage :
Holds the left side of an agreement,
But does not demand payment of people.

Therefore : to have De is to take charge of your agreements;
To be without De is to take charge of taking away from others.

The Way of heaven, while without favor,
Is always with virtuous people.

♦Harmonize a great resentment,
♦And there must exist some remaining resentment.
♦How can this be considered[2] good?
♦Thus[2] the sage[2] :
Holds the left side[A] of an agreement,
But does not demand [payment] of people.
Therefore : to have De is to take charge of your agreements;
♦To be without De is to take charge of taking away from others.
♦The Way of heaven, while without favor,
♦Is always [together]with virtuous people.[B]

Notes

The point of the beginning of this chapter seems to be that the sage does not create resentments in the first place

A : *Lau says that the left side of a contract or agreement was the creditor's side, so the sage is the one who is owed*

B : *Hatcher points out that while the Way of heaven itself is without favor, virtuous people have aligned themselves with it (because of their virtue), hence it is "with" them*

Cross-references

Way of heaven : #9, #47, #73, #77, #81

Chapter Eighty

• 小 國 寡 民 使 有 什 伯 之 器 而 不 用 • 使 民 重 死 而 不 遠 徙 雖 有 舟 輿 無 所 乘 之 雖 有 甲 兵 無 所 陳 之 使 (民) 復 結 繩 而 用 之 甘 其 食 美 其 服 安 其 居 樂 其 俗 鄰 國 相 望 雞 犬 之 聲 相 聞 民 至 老 死 **不 相 往 來**	In a small nation with few citizens : Ensure that it has the weapons of ten nobles, but does not use them. Ensure that the citizens take death seriously, and do not migrate far. Even though they have boats and carriages, there is no place to take advantage of them. Even though they have armor and weapons, there is no place to display them. Ensure that the citizens return to knotting ropes and using them, Find deliciousness in their food, Beauty in their clothes, Contentment in their dwellings, Happiness in their customs. Although neighboring nations overlook one another, And sounds of roosters and dogs can be heard in one another – The citizens reach old age and die, And do not come and go between one another.
♦In a <u>small</u> <u>nation</u> with <u>few</u> <u>citizens</u> : *Ensure* that it <u>has</u> the *weapons*[A] <u>of</u> <u>ten</u> *nobles*[B], <u>but</u> does <u>not</u> <u>use</u> them. [<u>make,cause</u>] [<u>tools</u>] [<u>Count</u>] *Ensure* that the <u>citizens</u> take <u>death</u> <u>seriously</u>, <u>and</u> do <u>not</u> <u>migrate</u> <u>far</u>. [<u>make,cause</u>] <u>Even though</u> they <u>have</u> <u>boats</u> and <u>carriages</u>, there is <u>no</u> <u>place</u> to <u>take advantage</u> of <u>them</u>.[C] <u>Even though</u> they <u>have</u> <u>armor</u> and <u>weapons</u>, there is <u>no</u> <u>place</u> to <u>display</u> <u>them</u>.[D] ♦*Ensure* that the <u>citizens</u> <u>return</u> to <u>knotting</u> <u>ropes</u> <u>and</u> <u>using</u> <u>them</u>[E], [<u>make,cause</u>] ♦Find <u>deliciousness</u> in <u>their</u> <u>food</u>, <u>Beauty</u> in <u>their</u> <u>clothes</u>, <u>Contentment</u> in <u>their</u> <u>dwellings</u>, <u>Happiness</u> in <u>their</u> <u>customs</u>. ♦[Although] <u>neighboring</u> <u>nations</u> *overlook one another*, [<u>look at</u>] [<u>each other</u>] ♦And <u>sounds</u> <u>of</u> *roosters* and <u>dogs</u> can be <u>heard</u> in *one another* – [<u>chickens</u>] [<u>each other</u>] ♦The <u>citizens</u> <u>reach</u> <u>old</u> age and <u>die</u>, ♦And do <u>not</u> <u>come</u> and <u>go</u> between *one another*. [<u>each other</u>]	<u>Notes</u> A : the symbol literally refers only to tools, but has been associated with weapons in #31, #36, and #57 : “sharp tools”, “weapons are not the tools of a noble man” B : the symbol specifically refers to a Count (see #32), but in keeping with other chapters, this is interpreted more generally as “nobles”; *the entire phrase probably means “as many weapons as the armies of ten Counts would have”* C : *have no need to use them; in other words, they do not want to leave, as supported by the last paragraph* D : compare to #36, where the sharp tools of the nation cannot be shown to the people E : *according to Ames&Hall, knotted ropes used to be used for record-keeping* <u>Cross-references</u> nobles (in general) : #32, #37, #39, #42, #62 die/death : #6, #33, #42, #50, #67, #74, #75, #76 citizens do not fear death, take death seriously/lightly : #74, #75 returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65

Chapter Eighty One

信 言 不 美
美 言 不 信
善 者 不 辯
辯 者 不 善
知 者 不 博
博 者 不 知 •
聖 人 不 積
既 以 為 人 己 愈 有
既 以 與 人 己 愈 多
天 之 道 利 而 不 害
聖 人 之 道 為 而 不 爭

True words are not beautiful;
Beautiful words are not true.

He who has virtue does not argue;
He who argues does not have virtue.

He who knows is not learned;
He who is learned does not know.

The sage does not accumulate things –
Since through serving people, the more one has;
Since through giving to people, one has even more.

The Way of heaven benefits and does not cause harm.
The Way of the sage acts yet does not strive.

♦True* words are not beautiful;
♦Beautiful words are not true*.
He who has virtue does not argue;
He who argues does not have virtue.
He who knows is not learned;
He who is learned does not know.
♦The sage[2] does not accumulate [things] –
♦Since *through* serving people, the more one[self] has;
[by means of]
Since *through* giving to people, one[self] has *even more*[2].
[by means of] [more more]
♦The Way of heaven benefits and does not cause harm.
The Way of the sage[2] acts yet does not strive.

Notes

Cross-references
one who is not virtuous : #27, #49, #62
Way of heaven : #9, #47, #73, #77, #79
no harm : #35, #56, #58, #60, #66
no striving : #3, #8, #22, #66, #68, #73

Appendix – Different Layers of the Dao De Jing

While translating the DDJ, I discovered John Emerson's articles on the possibility of various "layers" within it, based on the presence or absence of certain symbols and "themes" in each chapter. While he was not the first to suggest the presence of multiple layers, of particular interest to me was his comment : "Many of the objections to my method seemed to be objections to the kinds of rough, empirical, non-algorithmic methods best used to disentangle historically confused material." Having a background in something called pattern recognition, I decided to find out whether or not each chapter could be classified as belonging to these layers based on this purely analytical method.

Emerson tentatively identified Early, Middle, Late, Added (very small) and Post-Guodian layers. By definition, the Post-Guodian layer contains at least chapters 67-81, none of which appear in the Guodian source. Building on Emerson's work, extensive analysis using pattern recognition methods based on the relative frequencies of the symbols in each chapter indicates that the most self-consistent results are obtained when the DDJ is separated into three layers of chapters :

Early : 1 4 5 6 7 9 10 13 14 15 16 20 21 23 24 25 28 30 31 32 34 35 37 39 41 44 51 52 55 56
Late : 3 8 12 17 18 19 22 27 29 38 45 46 47 48 49 53 54 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66
Post-Guodian : 11 26 33 36 40 42 43 50 67-81
Mixed : 2

Excluding the chapters he identified as Middle (which ended up being assigned very evenly across the other three layers), none of these completely disagree with Emerson's assignments (except for 52, which is the only entire chapter he considered to be Added), although he assigns some sections of some chapters to other layers. While a significant majority (85%) of the chapters were strongly identified as belonging to their layer (the underlined chapters above), the pattern recognition process did indicate that a few (most notably chapters 24, 45, 46, 59, and 62, and to a lesser extent 8, 22, 30, 39, 44, and 49) may have elements of more than one layer present within them.

Note that while Emerson's names (Early, Late, Post-Guodian) are kept for convenience, they don't necessarily have to indicate separation in time – they could perhaps represent different oral traditions, or sayings that originally developed in different regions of China, which combined to form the Dao De Jing we know today. Also note that the Guodian document (~300 BCE) consists of chapters from both Early and Late in roughly equal numbers, so this "layering" actually happened very early.

Although chapter 40 was identified as being strongly Post-Guodian, it is present in the Guodian manuscript, but that is not considered a major problem. For example, if perhaps the post-Guodian "style" was already being developed at the time the Guodian document was created, then the presence of chapter 40 in the document could mean that it had already been written in this style, perhaps shortly before the Guodian document was created, whereas chapters 68-81 had yet to be written (or the Guodian compiler was not aware of their existence). There are probably many other scenarios that could explain such a result.

Chapter 2 was variously classified as belonging to all three layers, but the symbol distributions (below) simultaneously indicated that it cannot belong to any of them! If any chapter is truly a mixture of layers, it is this one (which Emerson agrees with), so it is not assigned to any.

With the chapters separated as given above, it is possible to identify which symbols are used more often in one layer than another, as shown in the table below. Each line represents one symbol, and shows its various English meanings (as used in this translation). "Weak" symbols show up three to six times more often in the indicated layer than the other two, while "Strong" symbols show up more than six times more often. Within these sections, symbols are ordered from the least unbalanced to most unbalanced distributions between the layers. "Unique" symbols show up only in that layer, and not even once in the others. In these sections, words are

listed from fewest appearances to most appearances. Weak and Strong symbols must show up in at least five chapters to be included, while Unique symbols must be in at least three chapters. Phrases (two or more symbols) are shown in italics. Some punctuation symbols are included as they tend to show differences in grammatical conventions between the layers. Where two symbols are consistently translated into the same punctuation, (#1) and (#2) are used to distinguish between them.

	Mostly Early	Mostly Late	Mostly Post-Guodian
Weak	valley call, say, speak return self deep mystery, deep and mysterious mother child, children fill, full maintain, protect	*do not act* truth, honest, trust* affairs, duties, trouble honest and just *non-action* kind, kindness* wise, wisdom* heart/mind	strong, inflexible, try originally, undoubtedly, firm, strong soft, softness, yielding dare, daring *Dao of*
Strong	! (#1) name, fame, reputation	choose, take, take hold of 100	weak, weakness victory, conquer die, death
Unique	? (#1) army blended, mingled pure and clear clear, pure, bright *newborn infant* hard work unfortunate, bad nobles (specifically Marquis) within, middle exist, survive, keep disgrace *without-name* same, sameness stop, rest, stay ? (#2) *no danger* gateway image *heaven & earth*	*rare goods* abandon *non-interference* family morality* clever, skillful bandit, evil thief, robbery confuse, confusion	treasure hard teach, teaching

The symbol for "die, death" that is strongly Post-Guodian is in only one non-Post-Guodian chapter (6, where the "spirit of the valley does not die"). All of the other 17 times (!) it is used is in Post-Guodian chapters, so if it wasn't for the one use in chapter 6, this symbol would be strongly unique to the Post-Guodian chapters.

Symbols that show up much more often in two layers but rarely in the other one are presented in the table on the following page, in the same format as the previous one. Symbols in the "Never" sections appear about equally often in the other two layers, but not once in the indicated layer.

"Dao" is *almost* three times more likely to appear in Early and Late than Post-Guodian (and there almost always as "Dao of"), but not quite enough to make it into the following table (under "Rarely in Post-Guodian").

Besides the symbol distributions, it is interesting to note that of the six chapters in which the majority of the sources are anti-Confucian, all but chapter 33 are Late (and it is Post-Guodian) – thus none of the Early chapters are anti-Confucian. Also, the anti-military chapters (30, 31) are Early, while the chapters offering military advice (68, 69) are Post-Guodian. Finally, "living for the substance" is a good thing in chapter 38 (Late), but a bad thing in chapters 50 and 75 (both Post-Guodian).

Early chapters are more concerned with heaven and earth, images of the feminine and the child, the concepts of "without-name" and "no danger", and are the only chapters that try to describe Dao (1, 4, 14, 21, 25, 32, 34, 35), while they have little to do with the sage (only twice using "thus the sage" in 30 chapters), governing the nation, easy vs. difficult, and never mention the concept of "not striving".

	Rarely in Early	**Rarely in Late**	**Rarely in Post-Guodian**
Weak	govern behavior, perform, travel virtue, good(ness), skilled ! (#2) *sage*	weapons who, which ready, would, about to, general create, life, produce one	De
Strong	benefit, profit, sharp nation citizens *thus the sage*		
Never	*virtuous person* misfortune serious, double easy *do not strive* difficult, hard	Qi good fortune scholar since, once maintain, protect master depend on, concerned with rare, few *do not know*	*100 families* female ocean, sea subtle mystery spirit bright, brightness empty arise, make move, movement, action begin, beginning arise, produce, go out !,? uncarved block not (非)

Late chapters have more Confucian terms, advice on how to rule, and talk about non-interference, but at the same time are the only ones that talk about possessing or "taking hold of" the world or the nation.

Post-Guodian chapters also offer some advice on how to rule, tend to deal with hard/soft/weak/strong, are the only chapters that offer military advice, and talk a lot about death, but rarely mention Dao or De, and never mention the feminine, the child, emptiness, or the uncarved block.

The rest of the appendix collects all the chapters of each layer together, so the reader can see their common themes. The final section is called "What Would the Sage Do?", and collects every reference to the Sage from the entire document.

<u>References</u>

A Stratification of Lao Tzu, by John J. Emerson; The Journal of Chinese Religions, #23, pp. 1-28; 1995
Lao Tzu Stratified, II: A Sketch, by John J. Emerson; http://www.idiocentrism.com/china.strata3.htm; 2003

Early

One

The Dao that can be spoken of is not the ever-constant Dao.
The name that can be named is not the ever-constant name.
That which is without-name is the beginning of heaven and earth.
That which possesses a name is the mother of the ten thousand creatures.

Therefore : always without-desire, thus you observe its subtle mystery.
Always possessing desires, thus you observe its external appearances.
These two, they arise from the same source but have different names;
This sameness is called their deep mystery.

Deep mysteries, and again deep mysteries –
The gateway of many subtle mysteries.

Four

Dao is like a cup or bowl, yet use it and there exists no need to fill it.
Profound and deep!, it appears to be the ancestor of the ten thousand creatures.

It blunts their sharpness,
Loosens their tangles,
Softens their brightness,
Makes them the same as the dust of the world.

Deep and profound!, it seems to barely exist.
I do not know whose child it is –
Its image came before that of god.

Five

Heaven and earth are not kind –
Thus the ten thousand creatures become as straw dogs to them.
The sage is not kind –
Thus the 100 families become as straw dogs to him.

The space between heaven and earth,
How is it just like a bellows or flute?
It is empty, yet does not run out.
The more it moves, and the more it produces.

Too much talking is exceptionally exhausting,
Which is not as good as maintaining what is within.

Six

The spirit of the valley does not die –
It is called the deep and mysterious feminine.

The gateway of this deep and mysterious feminine –
It is called the source of heaven and earth.

Unbroken, it seems to exist.
Using it takes no effort.

Seven

Heaven is eternal, earth is enduring.
The reason that heaven and earth can be eternal and enduring
Is because they do not live for themselves.
Therefore they can live forever.

Thus the sage :
Puts his self behind others, yet finds his self before them.
Considers his self extraneous, yet his self survives.

Is this not because he has no self-interests?
Therefore he can achieve his self-interests.

Nine

Holding and filling it
Are not as good as your stopping short.

Hammering and sharpening it
Can not be forever maintained.

When gold and jade fill a room,
There is no one who can protect it.

To have wealth and high rank, but with arrogance –
Then naturally their loss is your own fault.

When the task is successful, the self should let go of it.
This is the Way of heaven.

Early

Ten

Carrying and managing a body while embracing the One,
Are you able to not separate them?
Concentrating your Qi to become soft,
Are you able to be like a newborn infant?
Cleansing and clearing your deep and mysterious perception,
Are you able to be without blemish?
Loving the citizens and governing the nation,
Are you able to use non-action?
Opening and closing the gateway of heaven,
Are you able to serve as the feminine?
Attaining clear insight in all directions,
Are you able to not use your knowledge?

Creating them and raising them,
Creating but not possessing,
Acting but not concerned with the results,
Leading yet not governing –
This is called deep and mysterious De.

Thirteen

Favor and disgrace seem alarming.
High rank brings great suffering if you have a self.

What is meant by "favor and disgrace seem alarming"?
Favor makes you the inferior, so gaining it seems alarming.
Losing it also seems alarming.
This is what is meant by "favor and disgrace seem alarming".

What is meant by "high rank brings great suffering if you have a self"?
I am the reason that I have great suffering, I who act like I have a self.
When I am without a self, how could I have suffering?

Therefore : he who is high ranking and uses his self to serve the world –
It seems he can thus be entrusted with the world!
He who is loving and uses his self to serve the world –
It seems he can thus be entrusted with the world!

Fourteen

Look, it is not seen; its name is called elusive.
Listen, it is not heard; its name is called tenuous.
Grasp, it is not gotten; its name is called subtle and obscure.
These three things can not be investigated any further –
Therefore they blend and become one.

This one thing :
Its highest point is not bright;
Its lowest point is not dark.
Continuous and unending!, it can not be named;
It returns to non-existence.
It is called the form of that which is without-form;
The image of non-existence.
It is called confusing and indistinct.
Meet it and you do not see its beginning;
Follow it and you do not see its end.

Hold fast to the Way of the ancients
In order to master the present moment.
The ability to know the ancient beginning –
This is called the main principle of Dao.

Fifteen

The virtue of the ancients made they who were scholars subtle, mysterious, obscure, deep, and penetrating.
Their mysterious depths can not be understood.

Now : only because they can not be understood,
Therefore we try to emulate their appearance :
Hesitant!, as if crossing a winter stream.
Wary!, as if afraid of their neighbors all around.
Respectful!, they are like a visiting guest.
Yielding!, like ice that is about to to break off.
Honest and genuine!, they are like the uncarved block.
Wide and open!, they are like a valley.
Unclear!, they are like muddy water.

Who can take muddy water and use stillness to slowly and
gently make it pure and clear?
Who can take what is tranquil and use continual movement
to slowly and gently bring it to life?

He who maintains this Way does not desire to be full.
Now : only because he is not full,
Thus he can be hidden and unfinished.

Sixteen
Attain the utmost emptiness.
Maintain a profound stillness.

The ten thousand creatures arise in unison,
And thus I observe their return.
Now : all the myriad creatures return to their source.
Returning to the source speaks of stillness.
Stillness is called returning to the natural order.
Returning to the natural order speaks of the ever-constant.

Knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight.
Not knowing the ever-constant is foolish and creates misfortune.

Knowing the ever-constant leads to tolerance.
Being tolerant leads to being just and unbiased.
Being just and unbiased leads to being kingly.
Being kingly leads to heaven.
Heaven leads to Dao.
Dao leads to what endures.

When the self disappears, there can be no danger.

Twenty
Renounce learning and be without worry.

“Yes” together with “yeah” –
What is their mutual distance or nearness?
Beautiful together with ugliness –
What is their mutual distance or similarity?

That which people fear, they are not able to not fear.
How ridiculous! They are not yet centered!

Everyone is very festive,
As if enjoying the Tai Lao sacrifice,
As if climbing terraces in the spring.
I alone am unmoved! –
Like one who has not yet given any sign,
Like a newborn infant who does not yet act like a baby.
Very tired and worn out!, as if without a place to return to.
Everyone all has more than they need;
I alone seem to have lost everything.
I have the heart/mind of a foolish person, indeed!!
I am very mixed up and confused!

Common people are very clear and bright;
I alone seem confused.
Common people are very observant and alert;
I alone am very gloomy and depressed.
Tranquil!, they are like the ocean;
I drift on the wind!, as if without a place to rest.
Everyone all has a purpose;
I alone am stupid and stubborn, and appear mean and shallow.

I alone am different compared to other people,
And value the food of the mother.

Twenty one
The greatest De is possible only when Dao is followed.

The action of Dao on creatures is just indistinct, just confusing.
Confusing! and indistinct!, within it exists image.
Indistinct! and confusing!, within it exists things.
Obscure! and dark!, within it exists essence.
Its essence is extremely real and true.
Within it exists truth.

From the present reaching to antiquity,
Its name has not departed –
Thus I observe the father of the multitudes.
How do I thus know the father of the multitudes is like this?
By means of this.

Twenty three

Minimal words are naturally so.
Therefore : strong winds do not last the entire morning,
Sudden rains do not last the entire day.

Who makes these things? Heaven and earth.
Even heaven and earth can not maintain them forever,
And so how much less can people?

Therefore : of those who engage in Dao –
He who Daos is one with Dao.
He who Des is one with De.
He who loses is one with the loss.

For he who is one with Dao,
Dao is also pleased to have him.
For he who is one with De,
De is also pleased to have him.
For he who is one with loss,
Loss is also pleased to have him.

If you do not trust enough, then you will not have anyone's trust.

Twenty four

He who stands on tiptoe does not really stand.
He who stands astride can not travel.
He who displays himself does not have insight.
He who considers himself correct does not distinguish himself.
He who boasts about himself is without merit.
He who brags about himself does not endure.

He who lives in Dao –
Calls these leftover food and unnecessary behavior.
Creatures detest them, no matter what.
Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live by them.

Twenty five

Something existed unformed yet complete,
Before heaven and earth were created.
Silent! Empty!
Standing alone, not changing.
It circulates everywhere, and causes no danger.
It can be considered the mother of the world.

I do not know its name;
Its symbol is called Dao.
If I tried to make its name, I would call it great.
Being great speaks of departing.
Departing speaks of being remote.
Being remote speaks of returning.

Dao is great,
Heaven is great,
Earth is great,
The king is also great.
Within the realm exist four that are great,
And the king resides as one of them!

People follow the earth.
The earth follows heaven.
Heaven follows Dao.
Dao follows what is naturally so.

Twenty eight

Know your maleness, but maintain your femaleness.
Serve as a stream to the world.
Serving as a stream to the world,
The ever-constant De will not depart,
Returning you to the state of the newborn infant.

Know your brightness, but maintain your darkness.
Serve as an example to the world.
Serving as an example to the world,
The ever-constant De will not falter,
Returning you to the state of the limitless.

Know your honor, but maintain your disgrace.
Serve as a valley to the world.
Serving as a valley to the world,
The ever-constant De will then be sufficient,
Returning you to the state of the uncarved block.

When the uncarved block is broken up, then it becomes tools.
When the sage uses it, then he becomes the senior government official.
Therefore : the greatest cutting does not divide.

<u>Thirty</u>

He who uses Dao to assist the master of the people
Does not use weapons or strength on the world,
For his troubles would likely return –
In the dwelling places of armies, thorns and brambles are produced,
And so what is left behind a great army must have a bad year.

He who has virtue gets results and stops.
He does not dare to take by using strength.
He gets results, but never brags.
Gets results, but never boasts.
Gets results, but is not arrogant.
Gets results, but only when he has no choice.
Gets results, but never uses strength.

When creatures are robust but old,
This is called "not Dao".
That which is "not Dao" has an early finish.

<u>Thirty one</u>

Now : fine weapons, they are not tools of good fortune.
Creatures detest them, no matter what.
Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live by them.
When a noble man is in his dwelling, then he honors the left.
When he commands troops, then he honors the right.

Weapons, they are not tools of good fortune.
They are not the tools of a noble man.
When he has no choice but to use them,
To be calm and indifferent is superior –
Never pleased, indeed!
And he who is pleased enjoys killing people.

Now : he who enjoys killing people
Can not get what he desires from the world!

Therefore : in fortunate affairs honor the left,
In unfortunate affairs honor the right.
Thus the assistant general of the army resides on the left,
The supreme general of the army resides on the right.

Thus we say they are dwelling at a funeral :
When many people are killed,
Then mourn and weep with grief for them.
Victory in war thus means they will dwell at a funeral.

<u>Thirty two</u>

Dao is ever-constantly without-name.

Even though the concept of the uncarved block seems insignificant,
No one in the world can conquer it.
If nobles and kings could maintain it,
The ten thousand creatures would naturally obey.
Heaven and earth would join with each other,
Thus dropping a sweet dew.
There are no citizens who would make this happen,
Yet it would be naturally fair and impartial.

And so, begin to divide and you have names.
Once names exist,
Men should also be ready to know when to stop.
Knowing when to stop is the reason that there is no danger.

An analogy for the action of Dao in the world :
It is similar to a stream in a valley that becomes part of a large river or ocean.

<u>Thirty four</u>

Great Dao is like a vast flood!
It is able to flow left and right.

The ten thousand creatures depend on it in order for life,
And are not rejected.
It accomplishes its tasks successfully,
Yet does not possess a name.
It clothes and supports the ten thousand creatures,
But does not act as their master.

Therefore : since it is ever-constantly without-desire,
It can then be named insignificant.

Since the ten thousand creatures return to it
But it does not act as their master,
It can then be named great.

Thus the sage can achieve greatness
Because he does not act great.
Therefore he can achieve greatness.

Thirty five

Holding fast to the great image,
The entire world comes towards you.
Comes towards you, and meeting with no harm,
There is the greatest peace and calm.

Music together with good food make passing guests stay,
But Dao's words are bland!
They are without flavor.

Look for it, there is not enough to see.
Listen for it, there is not enough to hear.
Use it, there is not enough to exhaust.

Thirty seven

Dao ever-constantly resides in non-action,
Yet nothing is left undone.

If nobles and kings could maintain it,
The ten thousand creatures would naturally transform.
Transform, and if desire arises,
I would restrain it by means of the nameless uncarved block.

In the state of the nameless uncarved block,
Men also would be without-desire.
Not desiring, thus they would be still –
And the world would naturally settle.

Thirty nine

Of those who in ancient times attained oneness :
Heaven attained oneness, thus becoming pure and clear.
Earth attained oneness, thus becoming stable.
Spirit attained oneness, thus becoming potent.
The valley attained oneness, thus becoming full.
The ten thousand creatures attained oneness, thus becoming alive.
Nobles and kings attained oneness, thus serving the world faithfully.
They attained it.

If heaven could not use its purity and clarity,
I fear it would split apart.
If earth could not use its stability,
I fear it would erupt.
If spirit could not use its potency,
I fear it would cease to be.
If the valley could not use its fullness,
I fear it would be used up.
If the ten thousand creatures could not use their life,
I fear they would be destroyed.
If nobles and kings could not use their high rank and prominence,
I fear they would fall.

Therefore : humility thus serves as the source of high rank;
Low thus serves as the foundation of high.
Thus nobles and kings call themselves orphaned, lonely, and unlucky.
Does this not mean that humility thus serves as the source?
Does it not?

Therefore : to attain exceptional popularity is to be without popularity –
Do not desire to be scarce like jade,
But common like rock.

<u>Forty one</u>

The superior scholar hearing of Dao works hard and practices it.
The average scholar hearing of Dao seems to keep it, seems to lose it.
The inferior scholar hearing of Dao laughs greatly at it.
If he did not laugh, it would not be qualified to be Dao.

Therefore : in the established sayings that exist, it is said –
Insight into Dao seems like darkness.
Advancing in Dao seems like retreating.
Smooth Dao seems knotted.
Superior De seems like a valley.
The greatest purity seems like disgrace.
The most extensive De seems like it is not enough.
Established De seems aimless.
Real and true character seems inconsistent.

The greatest region is without borders.
The greatest vessel is last to be completed.
The greatest tone is a tenuous sound.
The greatest image is without-form.
Dao is hidden and without-name.

Now : only Dao is good at beginning and also good at completing.

<u>Forty four</u>

Fame and self : which do you love?
Self and property : which is greater?
Gain and loss : which is the affliction?

Extreme desire must lead to great expense.
Collecting too much must lead to substantial loss.

Knowing when you have enough, there can be no disgrace.
Knowing when to stop, there can be no danger.
Then you can forever endure.

<u>Fifty one</u>

Dao creates them,
De raises them,
Things shape them,
Circumstances complete them.

Thus among the ten thousand creatures,
There are none who do not respect Dao and honor De.
Respect of Dao,
Honor of De –
Now : there is no one who commands this,
Yet it is always naturally so.

Therefore : Dao creates them, De raises them.
Leads them, nourishes them,
Shelters them, heals them,
Supports them, protects them.

Creating but not possessing,
Acting but not concerned with the results,
Leading yet not governing –
This is called deep and mysterious De.

<u>Fifty two</u>

The world had a beginning,
Which can be considered the mother of the world.
Once you have realized its mother,
You thus know her children.
Once you know her children,
Return to and maintain their mother.

When the self disappears, there can be no danger.

Block your senses, close your gateway –
All your life you will not struggle.
Open your senses, be successful in your duties –
All your life you will not have relief.

Seeing the insignificant speaks of insight.
Maintaining softness speaks of strength.
Use your brightness to return to your insight.
Do not lose your self in misfortune.
This is called practicing the ever-constant.

Early

<u>Fifty five</u>

He who embodies the substance of De
Can be compared to a newborn child :
Wasps, scorpions, snakes, and serpents do not sting him,
Fierce beasts do not seize him,
Birds of prey do not claw him.
His bones are weak, his muscles are soft, yet his grasp is firm and strong.
He has not yet known the union of female and male, yet his penis rises.
He has the utmost essence, indeed!
He cries the entire day yet does not get hoarse.
He has the utmost harmony, indeed!

Knowing harmony speaks of the ever-constant.
Knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight.
Benefitting life speaks of good fortune.
Heart/mind making Qi speaks of strength.

When creatures are robust but old,
We call them “not Dao”.
That which is “not Dao” has an early finish.

<u>Fifty six</u>

He who knows does not speak;
He who speaks does not know.

Block your senses, close your gateway.
Blunt your sharpness,
Loosen your tangles,
Soften your brightness,
Be the same as the dust of the world.
This is called a deep and mysterious sameness.

Therefore : you can not gain it and be friendly,
Can not gain it and be unfriendly,
Can not gain it and benefit,
Can not gain it and cause harm,
Can not gain it and have high rank,
Can not gain it and be lowly.

Therefore you become valuable to the world.

Late

Three
Not honoring those who are esteemable
Ensures that the citizens do not strive.
Not valuing rare goods
Ensures that the citizens do not act like thieves.
Not showing that which can be desired
Ensures that the citizens' heart/minds do not become confused.

Thus the governing of the sage
Empties their heart/minds, fills their stomachs,
Weakens their ambitions, strengthens their bones.

By always ensuring that the citizens are without-knowledge and without-desire,
Those who make men wise will not dare to act.

Act with non-action, then all will be governed!

Eight
The highest virtue is like water –
Water's virtue benefits the ten thousand creatures, yet it does not strive.
It dwells in places that everyone detests,
Therefore it is almost comparable to Dao!

In dwelling, the virtue is in the land.
In your heart/mind, the virtue is in being profound and deep.
In relations, the virtue is in being kind.
In speech, the virtue is in being truthful.
In governing, the virtue is in being honest and just.
In your duties, the virtue is in being competent.
In action, the virtue is in the timing.

Now : only because there is no striving,
Therefore there is no blame.

Twelve
The five colors can make people's eyes blind.
The five tones can make people's ears deaf.
The five flavors can make people's mouths dull.
Excessive hunting and horse racing can make people's heart/minds become wild.
Rare goods can make people's behavior corrupt.

Thus the sage :
Acts on what is inside, he does not act on what he sees.
Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.

Seventeen
The existence of the best ruler is barely known to the people.
Next is one who they love and praise.
Next is one who they fear.
Next is one who they ridicule.

If the ruler does not trust enough, then he will not have anyone's trust.

Thoughtful!, he values his words.

When tasks are accomplished and duties are successful,
The 100 families all say "we are naturally so".

Eighteen
When the great Dao is abandoned,
There exists kindness and morality.

When intelligence and wisdom arise,
There exists a great deal of deception.

When the six relationships are not in harmony,
There exists devoted children and loving parents.

When the nation and the families are very confused,
There exists loyal officials.

Nineteen
Renounce sacredness, abandon wisdom,
And the citizens benefit 100-fold.
Renounce kindness, abandon morality,
And the citizens return to being devoted children and loving parents.
Renounce cleverness, abandon profit,
And thieves and bandits will not exist.

These three things thus make a civilized society, but are not enough.

Therefore : to ensure the citizens have a place to belong–
See the simplicity,
Embrace the concept of the uncarved block,
Less selfishness,
Fewer desires.

Late

Twenty two

What is wrong then becomes whole and perfect.
What is bent then becomes straight.
What is hollow then becomes filled.
What is worn out then becomes new.
Have little, then gain.
Have too much, then become confused.

Thus the sage :
Embraces the One, thus serving as an example to the world –
He does not display himself, therefore he has insight.
Does not consider himself correct, therefore he distinguishes himself.
Does not boast about himself, therefore he possesses merit.
Does not brag about himself, therefore he endures.

Now : only because he does not strive,
Therefore no one in the world can strive against him.

That which the ancients say :
"He who is wrong then becomes whole and perfect" –
How can these be empty words?
Be truly whole and perfect, and return to it.

Twenty seven

A good traveler is without wagon track or footprint.
A good speaker is without flaw or disgrace.
A good accountant does not use counting tokens.
A good barrier is without bar or lock, yet can not be opened.
A good binding is without cord or restraint, yet can not be loosened.

Thus the sage :
Is always good at helping people,
Therefore he does not abandon people.
Is always good at helping creatures,
Therefore he does not abandon creatures.
This is called following your insight.

Therefore : he who is a virtuous person is the teacher of he who is not a virtuous person.
He who is not a virtuous person is the resource of he who is a virtuous person.
If the latter does not value his teacher,
Or the former does not love his resource,
Even if there is wisdom, there will be great confusion.
This is called the essential subtle mystery.

Twenty nine

Would you take hold of the world and control it?
I see you have no choice.

Now : the world is a divine vessel,
You can not control it (indeed!).
He who acts, ruins it;
He who grasps, loses it.

Therefore : creatures are
Sometimes active, sometimes passive,
Sometimes breathe heavy, sometimes breathe easy,
Sometimes strong, sometimes weak,
Sometimes oppressed, sometimes overthrown.

Thus the sage :
Removes the extremes,
Removes the extravagant and wasteful,
Removes the arrogance.

Thirty eight

A man of highest De does not use his De, thus he possesses De.
A man of inferior De does not lose his De, thus he is without De.

A man of highest De uses non-action, and acts without motive.
A man of inferior De coerces others, and has a motive to act.
A man of highest kindness coerces others, and acts without motive.
A man of highest morality coerces others, and has a motive to act.
A man of highest propriety coerces others, and if there is no one who responds,
Then he rolls up his sleeves and keeps doing it.

Therefore : lose Dao, and later comes De.
Lose De, and later comes kindness.
Lose kindness, and later comes morality.
Lose morality, and later comes propriety.
Now : propriety is that which is merely the appearance of loyalty and honesty,
And the beginning of confusion.

He who is ahead in knowledge has the flower of Dao,
But the beginning of stupidity and foolishness.

Thus the greatest elders :
Live by Dao's substance, and do not dwell on Dao's appearance.
Live on Dao's fruit, and do not dwell on Dao's flower.
Therefore they leave that and choose this.

Forty five
Great achievement seems incomplete,
But its usefulness is not impaired.

Great fullness is like a cup or bowl,
Its usefulness is not exhausted.

Great straightness seems bent.
Great skillfulness seems clumsy.
Great debaters seem slow of speech.

Restlessness conquers cold.
Stillness conquers heat.

Purity and clarity along with stillness makes the world proper and correct.

Forty six
When the world possesses Dao,
Riding horses are nonetheless used for manure.
When the world is without Dao,
War-horses are bred in the countryside.

There is no fault greater than the capacity for desire.
There is no misfortune greater than not knowing when you have enough.
There is no error greater than desire for gain.

Therefore : knowing the sufficiency of having enough, there is always enough!

Forty seven
You do not have to go out the door
In order to to know the world.
You do not have to look out the window
In order to to know the Way of heaven.

The farther you go out,
You know even less.

Thus the sage :
Does not travel, yet knows.
Does not display himself, yet has a reputation.
Does not act, yet accomplishes.

Forty eight
The actions of those who learn daily increase.
The actions of those who Dao daily decrease.
Decreasing and again decreasing,
In order to arrive at non-action.

Use non-action, and nothing is left undone.
To take hold of the world, always use non-interference.
When you are compelled to interfere,
Then you are not qualified to take hold of the world.

Forty nine
The sage does not have a constant heart/mind,
Thus the 100 families' heart/minds become his heart/mind.

He who is virtuous, I am virtuous to him.
He who is not virtuous, I am also virtuous to him.
Because De is virtue.

He who is honest, I am honest with him.
He who is not honest, I am also honest with him.
Because De is honesty.

The sage lives in the world, gathering it all in.
And so he serves the world, merging with their heart/minds.

The 100 families all pay attention to their ears and eyes,
And the sage treats them all like his children.

Fifty three
If I correctly use the tiniest bit of knowledge that I possess
While travelling on the great Way,
It is only walking off the path that I need to fear.
The great Way is extremely even,
But the citizens are fond of side paths.

Although the royal court is very well-kept,
The fields are very overgrown with weeds,
The granaries are very empty.
While at the court they wear refined multicolored silks,
Carry sharp swords,
Stuff themselves with drink and food,
And have an excess of wealth and goods.

This is called robbery and extravagance,
Not Dao, indeed!!

Late

Fifty four

That which is well established is not uprooted.
That which is well embraced is not abandoned.
Thus children and grandchildren offer sacrifices, and so sacrifices do not stop.

Cultivate it in the self – your De will then be true and real.
Cultivate it in the family – its De will then be more than enough.
Cultivate it in the village – its De will then last forever.
Cultivate it in the nation – its De will then be abundant.
Cultivate it in the world – its De will then be everywhere.

Therefore : use your self to contemplate the self.
Use your family to contemplate the family.
Use your village to contemplate the village.
Use your nation to contemplate the nation.
Use the world to contemplate the world.

How do I thus know the world is like this?
By means of this.

Fifty seven

Use honesty and justness when governing a nation.
Use strange and unusual tactics when commanding troops.
Use non-interference to take hold of the world.
How do I thus know it is like this?
By means of this :

The world has many prohibitions and taboos,
And the citizens become even poorer.
The citizens have many sharp tools,
And the nation and the families grow in confusion.
The people have too much knowledge and cleverness,
And strange things begin to increase.
Matters of law are increasingly proclaimed,
And more thieves and bandits exist.

Therefore : the sage says –
I use non-action, and the citizens naturally transform.
I cherish stillness, and the citizens naturally become honest and just.
I use non-interference, and the citizens naturally become wealthy.
I am without-desire, and the citizens naturally return to the state of the uncarved block.

Fifty eight

If their government is very restrained,
Its citizens will be very genuine and honest.
If their government is very observant and alert,
Its citizens will be very lacking and deficient.

Misfortune! is that which good fortune leans on.
Good fortune! is that which misfortune lies on.
Who knows their limits?
They are not honest and just.
Honesty and justness returns, becoming strange and unusual.
Virtue returns, becoming weird and strange.

The confusion of the people –
Its days have indeed been everlasting.

Thus the sage :
Is honest and does not divide,
Is honorable and does not injure,
Is straightforward and does not indulge in excess,
Is bright but does not dazzle.

Fifty nine

When governing people or doing heaven's duties,
It is better to be sparing.

Now : only when you can be sparing,
This is called early acceptance.
Early acceptance is called doubling your accumulation of De.
With a double accumulation of De,
Then everything can be overcome.
When everything can be overcome,
Then no one knows your limits.
When no one knows your limits,
You can possess the nation.
Possessing the mother of the nation,
You can forever endure.

This is called having a deep source and a firm foundation,
The Way of long life and enduring sight.

Sixty

Governing a great nation is like cooking a small fish.

Because Dao is present in the world,
Its ghosts do not have spirit.

Not that its ghosts do not have any spirit,
But their spirit does not injure people.

Not only does their spirit not injure people,
The sage also does not injure people.

Now : since these two do not injure each other,
Therefore their De merges and returns!

Sixty one

A great nation is like the lowest places water can flow –
The merging place of the world,
The female of the world.

The female always uses stillness to conquer the male.
By using stillness, she becomes lower-than.

Therefore : if a great nation is lower-than a small nation,
Then it takes hold of the small nation.
If a small nation is lower-than a great nation,
Then it is taken hold of by the great nation.

Therefore : sometimes one nation is lower-than in order to take hold of,
Sometimes one nation is lower-than and then it is taken hold of.

A great nation merely desires to combine livestock and people,
A small nation merely desires to get work for its people.
Now : for both nations to each get that which is their desire,
It is proper for the great nation to be lower-than.

Sixty two

That which Daos is the obscure mystery of the ten thousand creatures.
This is the treasure of a virtuous person,
And that which is the protection of a person who is not virtuous.

Beautiful speech can be used in the market,
Respectful behavior can benefit people.
People who are not virtuous,
Why abandon them?

Therefore : when inaugurating the son of heaven,
Or installing the three nobles –
Even if you possessed jade disks drawn by a team of four horses,
That is not as good as sitting and offering this Way.

What was the ancients' reason that they valued this Way?
Did they not say :
Seek in order to obtain,
Have faults in order to be forgiven?

Therefore Dao becomes valuable to the world.

Sixty three

Act with non-action.
Handle duties with non-interference.
Taste that which is without-flavor.

Greatness is insignificant, too much is less.
Repay animosity with De.

Plan for the difficult while it is easy.
Act on the great while it is tiny.
In the world, difficult duties certainly start while easy.
In the world, great duties certainly start while tiny.

Thus the sage in the end does not act great,
Therefore he can achieve his greatness.

Men who make promises lightly, certainly few will trust.
Men who expect most duties to be easy will certainly have many difficulties.

Thus the sage plans for things to be difficult,
Therefore in the end he is without difficulty!

Sixty four

What is peaceful is easy to hold.
What has not yet been revealed is easy to plan for.
What is brittle is easy to shatter.
What is minute is easy to scatter.
Act on it while it does not yet exist.
Govern them while they are not yet confused.

A tree too big to embrace is created from the tiniest shoot.
A terrace of nine stories rises from a pile of dirt.
A journey of a thousand miles begins from under the feet.

He who acts, ruins it.
He who grasps, loses it.

Thus the sage :
Does not act, therefore he does not ruin.
Does not grasp, therefore he does not lose.

Citizens are always on the verge of achieving their undertakings, yet they ruin them.
Be as careful in the end as if it was the beginning,
Then you will not ruin your affairs.

Thus the sage :
Desires to not desire,
Does not value rare goods,
Learns to not learn.

He returns to that which everyone else has passed over,
Thus helping the ten thousand creatures to be naturally so,
Yet not daring to act.

Sixty five

The virtue of the ancients (they who acted in Dao),
Did not use it to enlighten the citizens,
But would have used it to keep them ignorant –
The citizens are hard to govern
Because they have too much knowledge.

Therefore : using knowledge to govern the nation
Is the bane of the nation.
Not using knowledge to govern the nation
Is the good fortune of the nation.
He who has knowledge of these two also has them as examples.

To always understand these examples –
This is called deep and mysterious De.
Deep and mysterious De is so profound! and remote!
That when creatures return, it returns with them!
Then they reach the greatest harmony.

Sixty six

The reason that rivers and seas can act as kings of the 100 valleys
Is because they are good at being lower-than them.
Therefore : they can act as kings of the 100 valleys.

Thus the sage :
In desiring to be above the citizens,
He must by means of his speech be lower-than them.
In desiring to be before the citizens,
He must by means of his self be behind them.

Thus the sage :
Lives above them, but the citizens are not burdened.
Lives in front of them, but the citizens are not harmed.
Thus the world is pleased to promote him, and does not tire of him.

Because he does not strive,
Therefore no one in the world can strive against him.

Post-Guodian

<u>Eleven</u>
Thirty spokes of a wheel share one hub;
In its emptiness exists the usefulness of the cart.

Mix water with clay thus making a vessel;
In its emptiness exists the usefulness of the vessel.

Cut out doors and windows thus making a room;
In their emptiness exists the usefulness of the room.

Therefore : what exists thus makes a thing profitable;
Emptiness thus makes it useful.

<u>Twenty six</u>
Serious serves as the source of frivolous.
Stillness serves as the ruler of restlessness.

Thus the noble man travels the entire day,
And does not stray from his wagon.
He is serious, even though glorious sights and feasts exist;
He lives above them, like this.

So how could one be the master of ten thousand chariots,
And conduct his self frivolously in the world?

Be frivolous, then lose the source.
Be restless, then lose the rulership.

<u>Thirty three</u>
He who knows people is wise;
He who knows himself has insight.

He who is victorious over people possesses power;
He who is victorious over himself is strong.

He who knows he has enough is wealthy;
He who uses force possesses ambition.

He who does not lose his place endures;
He who dies yet does not perish has longevity.

<u>Thirty six</u>
When you are about to gather something,
You must have originally spread it out.
When you are about to weaken something,
You must have originally strengthened it.
When you are about to abandon something,
You must have originally been interested in it.
When you are about to seize something,
You must have originally given it.

This is called subtle and obscure insight.

What is soft and weak conquers what is hard and strong.

Fish can not escape from the deep;
The sharp tools of the nation
Can not be shown to the people.

<u>Forty</u>
The movement of Dao returns things.
The function of Dao is to weaken things.

The ten thousand creatures of the world are created from being;
Being is created from non-being.

<u>Forty two</u>
Dao creates one.
One creates two.
Two creates three.
Three creates the ten thousand creatures.
The ten thousand creatures carry Yin and embrace Yang,
Pouring their Qi together, thus becoming harmonious.

That which people detest :
Being alone, orphaned, lonely, and unlucky –
Yet kings and nobles thus name themselves.

Therefore : creatures
Sometimes lose, yet they gain;
Sometimes gain, yet they lose.

That which people teach, I also teach :
Those who are bullies and hoodlums do not meet their natural death.
I will thus become their elder teacher.

Post-Guodian

<u>Forty three</u>
The softest things of the world
Overrun the hardest things of the world.

Non-being can enter where there is no space in between.
Thus I know that non-action has benefits.

The teaching of no-talking,
The benefit of non-action –
Few in the world attain these.

<u>Fifty</u>
Between coming out into life and entering death,
Followers of life are 3 in 10.
Followers of death are 3 in 10.
People whose lives are merely moving them towards the place of death
Are also 3 in 10.

Now : what is the reason?
Because they live life for its substance.

But I have heard that he who is skilled at taking in life
Can travel the mountains and does not meet rhino or tiger,
Can enter a battle not wearing armor or weapons.
The rhino has no place to thrust its horns,
The tiger has no place to use its claws,
The weapon has no place to allow its blade.

Now : what is the reason?
Because for him there is no place of death.

<u>Sixty seven</u>
In the world, all say I am great,
But do not seem to be like everyone else.
Now : only because I am not like everyone else, therefore I can be great.
If I was like everyone else,
Long ago! I would have become insignificant, indeed!

Now : I possess three treasures –
Hold and maintain them.
The first is called compassion,
The second is called economy,
The third is called not daring to act first in the world.

With compassion, you can therefore be brave.
With economy, you can therefore expand.
By not daring to act first in the world,
Therefore you can achieve the capacity for leadership.

At present, people abandon compassion but also try to be brave,
Abandon economy but also try to expand,
Abandon being behind but also try to be first –
This is death!

Now : when compassion is used in war, the consequence is victory.
When it is used for protection, the consequence is strength.
When heaven would help you,
Using compassion it protects you.

<u>Sixty eight</u>
He who is good at being a scholar is not militant.
He who is good at war does not get angry.
He who is good at conquering the enemy does not engage them.
He who is good at making use of people acts lower-than them.

This is called the De of not striving.
This is called the power of making use of people.
This is called joining the elite of heaven’s ancients, indeed!

Post-Guodian

Sixty nine
Those who command troops have a saying :
I dare not act like the master, but instead act like a guest.
Dare not advance an inch, but instead retreat a foot.

This is called marching without marching,
Seizing without using your arms,
Routing without having an enemy,
Defending without using weapons.

There is no misfortune greater than underestimating the enemy.
By underestimating the enemy, I nearly lose my treasures.

Therefore : when armies on opposing sides are evenly matched,
Then they who mourn will be victorious!

Seventy
My words are very easy to understand,
Very easy to practice.
But there is no one in the world who can understand them,
There is no one who can practice them.

My words possess a lineage,
My duties possess a ruler.

Now : only because I am without-knowledge,
Thus I am not understood.
Those who understand me are rare,
Consequently I am one who is valued!

Thus the sage wears coarse cloth, but carries jade in his heart.

Seventy one
Knowing that you do not know is honorable!
Not knowing that you know is a sickness!

Now : only when you are sick of sickness,
Thus you are not sick.

The sage is not sick
Because he is sick of sickness.
Thus he is not sick.

Seventy two
If the citizens do not fear your authority,
Then a greater authority will arrive!

Do not disrespect their dwellings,
Do not despise their livelihood.

Now : only because you do not despise them,
Thus they will not tire of you.

Thus the sage :
Knows himself but not display himself,
Loves himself but does not exalt himself.
Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.

Seventy three
When your courage lies in daring,
The consequence is killing.
When your courage lies in not daring,
The consequence is survival.

These two choices, they sometimes cause benefit, sometimes cause harm.
That which heaven detests – who knows its reasons?

The Way of heaven :
Does not strive, yet skillfully achieves its goals.
Does not speak, yet skillfully responds.
Does not summon, yet everything naturally comes to it.
Is certainly unhurried, yet skillfully prepares.

Heaven’s net is extremely vast;
It is wide meshed, yet does not fail.

Seventy four
If the citizens do not fear death,
How can you use death to frighten them?
Assuming you could ensure that the citizens always fear death,
And I get hold of those who act strange and unusual and kill them,
Then who would be daring?

There will always exist an executioner.
Now : to take the place of the executioner to do the killing,
This is called taking the place of a great craftsman to carve wood.
Now : of those who take the place of a great craftsman to carve wood,
Few will not injure their hand!

Post-Guodian

Seventy five

The citizens are hungry
Because their superiors eat too much of their taxes.
Thus they are hungry.

The citizens are hard to govern
Because their superiors are compelled to take action.
Thus they are hard to govern.

The citizens take death lightly
Because they seek the substance of life.
Thus they take death lightly.

Now : only he who has no use for being alive
Is virtuous compared to he who values living.

Seventy six

The people are born (indeed!) soft and weak.
They die (indeed!) hard and inflexible.
The ten thousand creatures, the grass and trees, are born (indeed!) soft and fragile.
They die (indeed!) dried and withered.

Therefore : that which is hard and inflexible is a follower of death.
That which is soft and weak is a follower of life.

Thus if a weapon is inflexible, the consequence is defeat.
If a tree is inflexible, then it snaps.

Inflexible and great dwell below.
Soft and weak dwell above.

Seventy seven

The Way of heaven, how it is just like stretching a bow?
He who is high is pressed down by it.
He who is low is lifted by it.
He who has excess is reduced by it.
He who does not have enough is filled by it.

The Way of heaven
Reduces what has excess and fills what does not have enough.
The Way of people on the other hand is not like this,
And takes from those who do not have enough in order to
offer it to those who have too much.

Who can have too much and offer it to the world?
Only he who possesses Dao.

Thus the sage :
Acts, but is not concerned with the results.
Accomplishes his tasks, but does not dwell on them.
He does not desire to display his virtue.

Seventy eight

In the world, nothing is softer and weaker than water.
Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong,
There is nothing that can surpass it.
This is because it endlessly replaces itself.

Weakness conquers strength.
Softness conquers hardness.
In the world, there is no one who does not know this,
But there is no one who can practice it.

Thus the sage says :
Accepting upon oneself the disgrace of the nation
Is called being master of the shrines.
Accepting upon oneself the misfortune of the nation
Is called being king of the world.

Honest words seem contrary.

Post-Guodian

Seventy nine

Harmonize a great resentment,
And there must exist some remaining resentment.
How can this be considered good?

Thus the sage :
Holds the left side of an agreement,
But does not demand payment of people.

Therefore : to have De is to take charge of your agreements;
To be without De is to take charge of taking away from others.

The Way of heaven, while without favor,
Is always with virtuous people.

Eighty

In a small nation with few citizens :
Ensure that it has the weapons of ten nobles, but does not use them.
Ensure that the citizens take death seriously, and do not migrate far.
Even though they have boats and carriages, there is no place to take advantage of them.
Even though they have armor and weapons, there is no place to display them.

Ensure that the citizens return to knotting ropes and using them,
Find deliciousness in their food,
Beauty in their clothes,
Contentment in their dwellings,
Happiness in their customs.

Although neighboring nations overlook one another,
And sounds of roosters and dogs can be heard in one another –
The citizens reach old age and die,
And do not come and go between one another.

Eighty one

True words are not beautiful;
Beautiful words are not true.

He who has virtue does not argue;
He who argues does not have virtue.

He who knows is not learned;
He who is learned does not know.

The sage does not accumulate things –
Since through serving people, the more one has;
Since through giving to people, one has even more.

The Way of heaven benefits and does not cause harm.
The Way of the sage acts yet does not strive.

As mentioned above, chapter 2 seems to be a truly "mongrel" chapter, with characteristics that indicate it belongs to all three layers, and none of them. Therefore, it is presented here, separate from the other layers.

Two

In the world, when all know that the action of beauty is beautiful, then ugliness ensues.
When all know that the action of good is goodness, then not-good ensues.

Therefore : being and non-being create each other,
Difficult and easy complete each other,
Long and short contrast each other,
High and low lean on each other,
Tone and voice harmonize each other,
Before and after follow each other.

Thus the sage :
Lives by using non-action in his duties,
And practicing no-talking in his teachings.

The ten thousand creatures arise, but do not have a beginning.
Creating but not possessing;
Acting, but not concerned with the results;
Accomplishing tasks, but not dwelling on them.

Now : only because there is no dwelling,
Thus the results do not depart.

What Would the Sage Do?

Thus the sage :
Lives by using non-action in his duties,
And practicing no-talking in his teachings.

Thus the governing of the sage
Empties their heart/minds, fills their bellies,
Weakens their ambitions, strengthens their bones.

The sage is not kind;
Thus the 100 families become as straw dogs to him.

Thus the sage :
Puts his self behind others, yet finds his self before them.
Considers his self extraneous, yet his self survives.
Is this not because he has no self-interests?
Therefore he can achieve his self-interests.

Thus the sage :
Acts on what is inside, he does not act on what he sees.
Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.

Thus the sage :
Embraces the One, thus serving as an example to the world –
He does not display himself, therefore he has insight.
Does not consider himself correct, therefore he distinguishes himself.
Does not boast about himself, therefore he possesses merit.
Does not brag about himself, therefore he endures.
Now : only because he does not strive,
Therefore no one in the world can strive against him.

Thus the sage :
Is always good at helping people,
Therefore he does not abandon people.
Is always good at helping creatures,
Therefore he does not abandon creatures.
This is called following your insight.

Thus the sage :
Removes the extremes,
Removes the extravagant and wasteful,
Removes the arrogance.

Thus the sage can achieve greatness
Because he does not act great.
Therefore he can achieve greatness.

Thus the sage :
Does not travel, yet knows.
Does not display himself, yet has a reputation.
Does not act, yet accomplishes.

The sage does not have a constant heart/mind,
Thus the 100 families' heart/minds become his heart/mind.

The sage lives in the world, taking it all in.
And so he serves the world, merging with their heart/minds.

The 100 families all pay attention to their ears and eyes,
And the sage treats them all like his children.

Therefore : the sage says –
I use non-action, and the citizens naturally transform.
I cherish stillness, and the citizens naturally become honest and just.
I use non-interference, and the citizens naturally become wealthy.
I am without-desire, and the citizens naturally return to the state of the uncarved block.

Thus the sage :
Is honest and does not divide,
Is honorable and does not injure,
Is straightforward and does not indulge in excess,
Is bright but does not dazzle.

The sage also does not injure people.

Thus the sage in the end does not act great,
Therefore he can achieve his greatness.

Thus the sage plans for things to be difficult,
Therefore in the end he is without difficulty!

Thus the sage :
Does not act, therefore he does not ruin.
Does not grasp, therefore he does not lose.

Thus the sage :
Desires to not desire,
Does not value rare goods,
Learns to not learn.

Thus the sage :
In desiring to be above the citizens,
He must by means of his speech be lower-than them.
In desiring to be before the citizens,
He must by means of his self be behind them.

Thus the sage :
Lives above them, but the citizens are not burdened.
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The Way of the sage acts yet does not strive.

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